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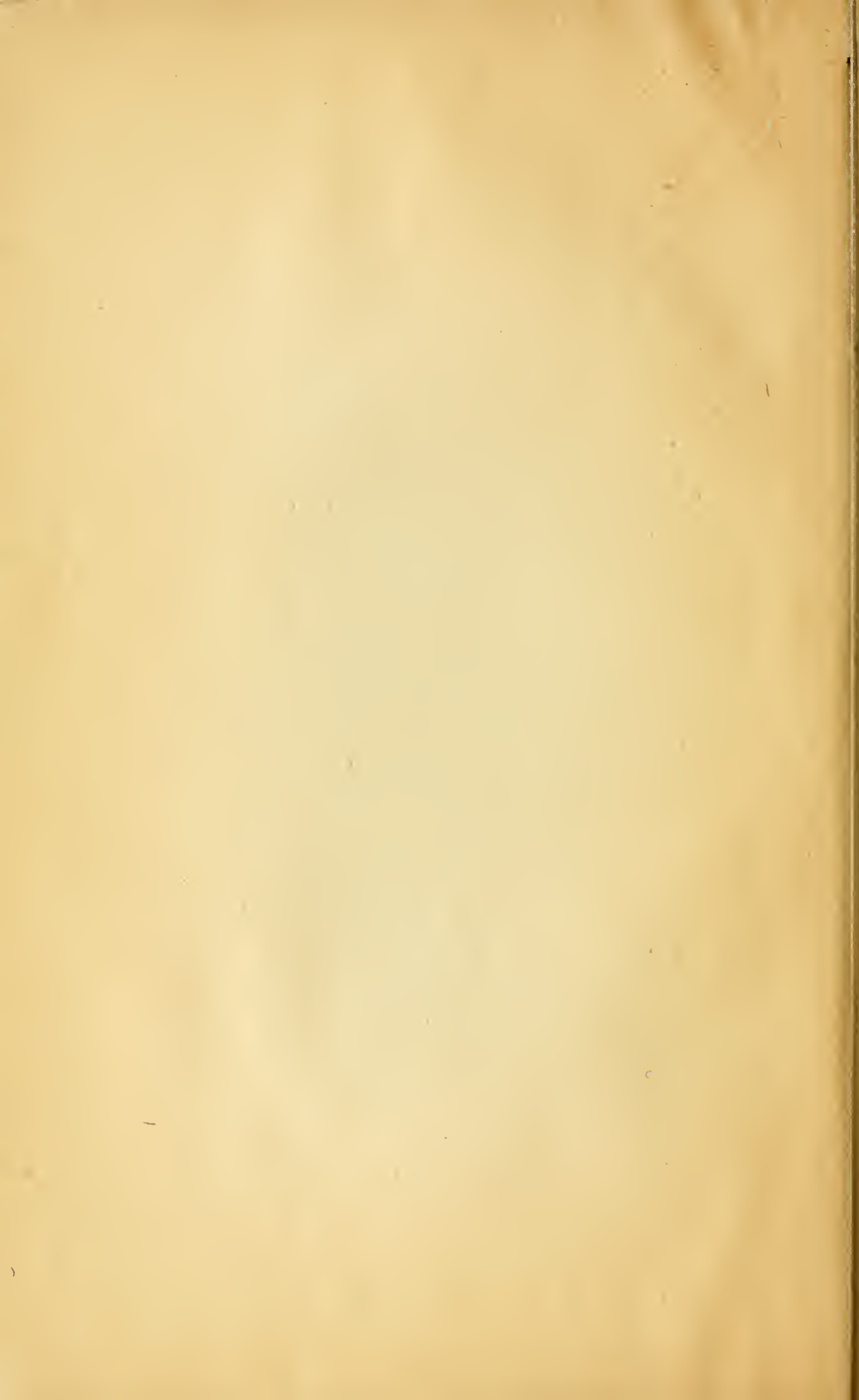




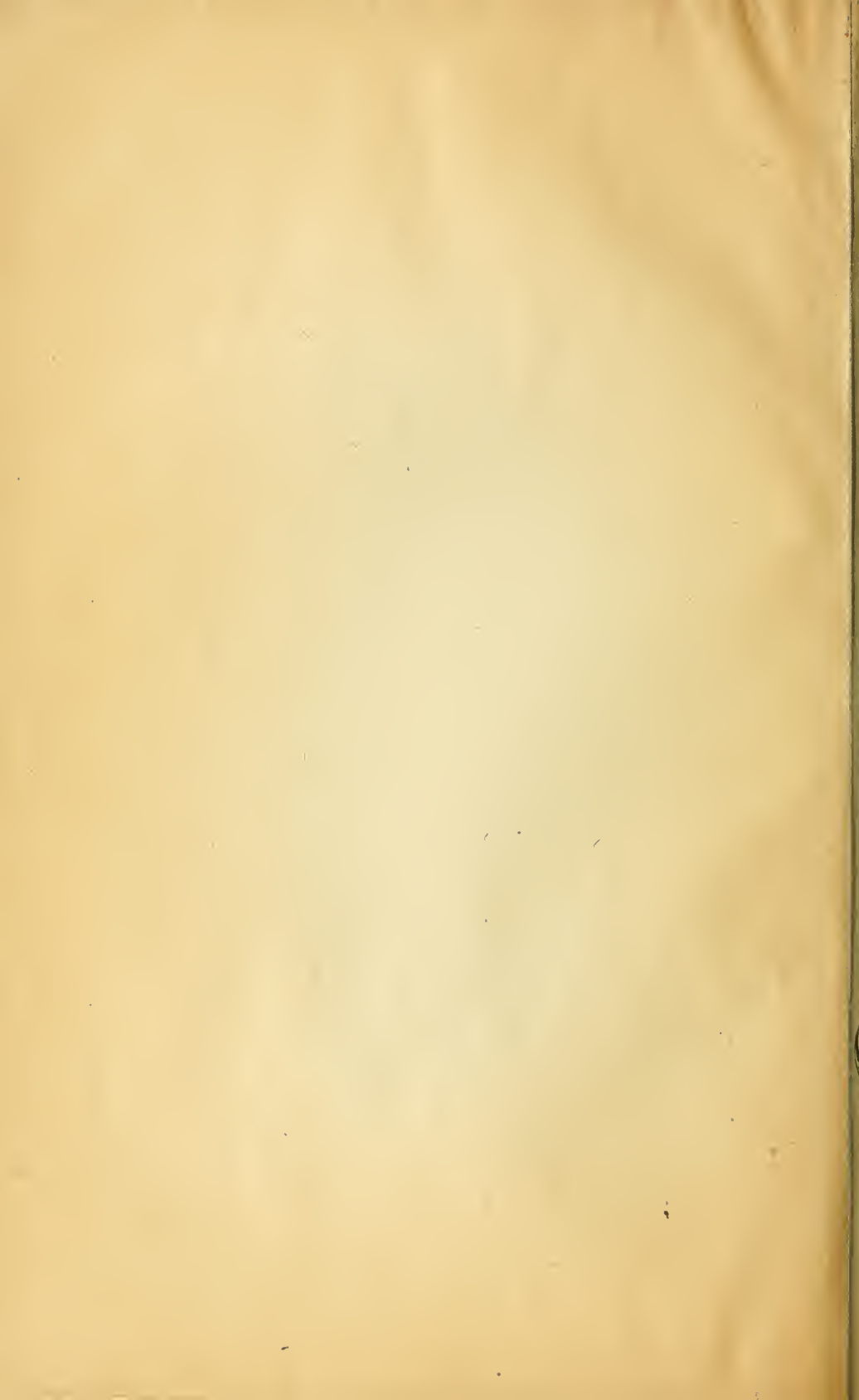










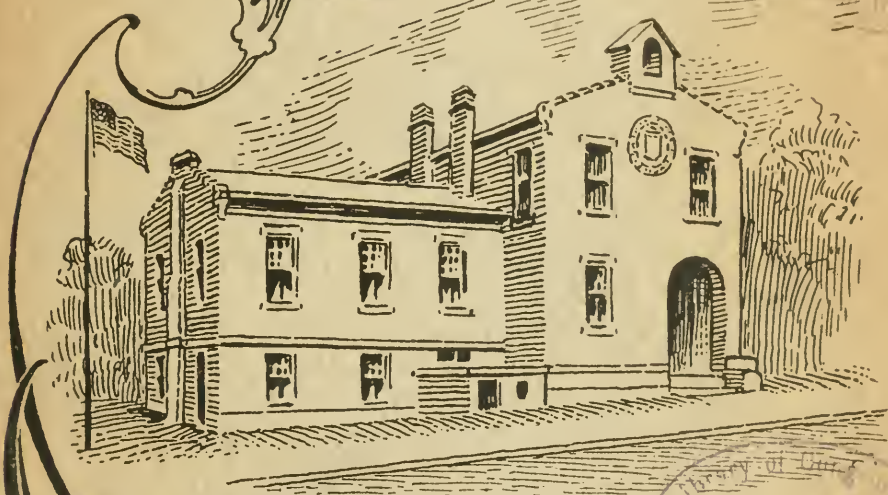




Vol. XXIX.]

[No. 1.

# HISTORICAL REGISTER



March, 1926

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.  
For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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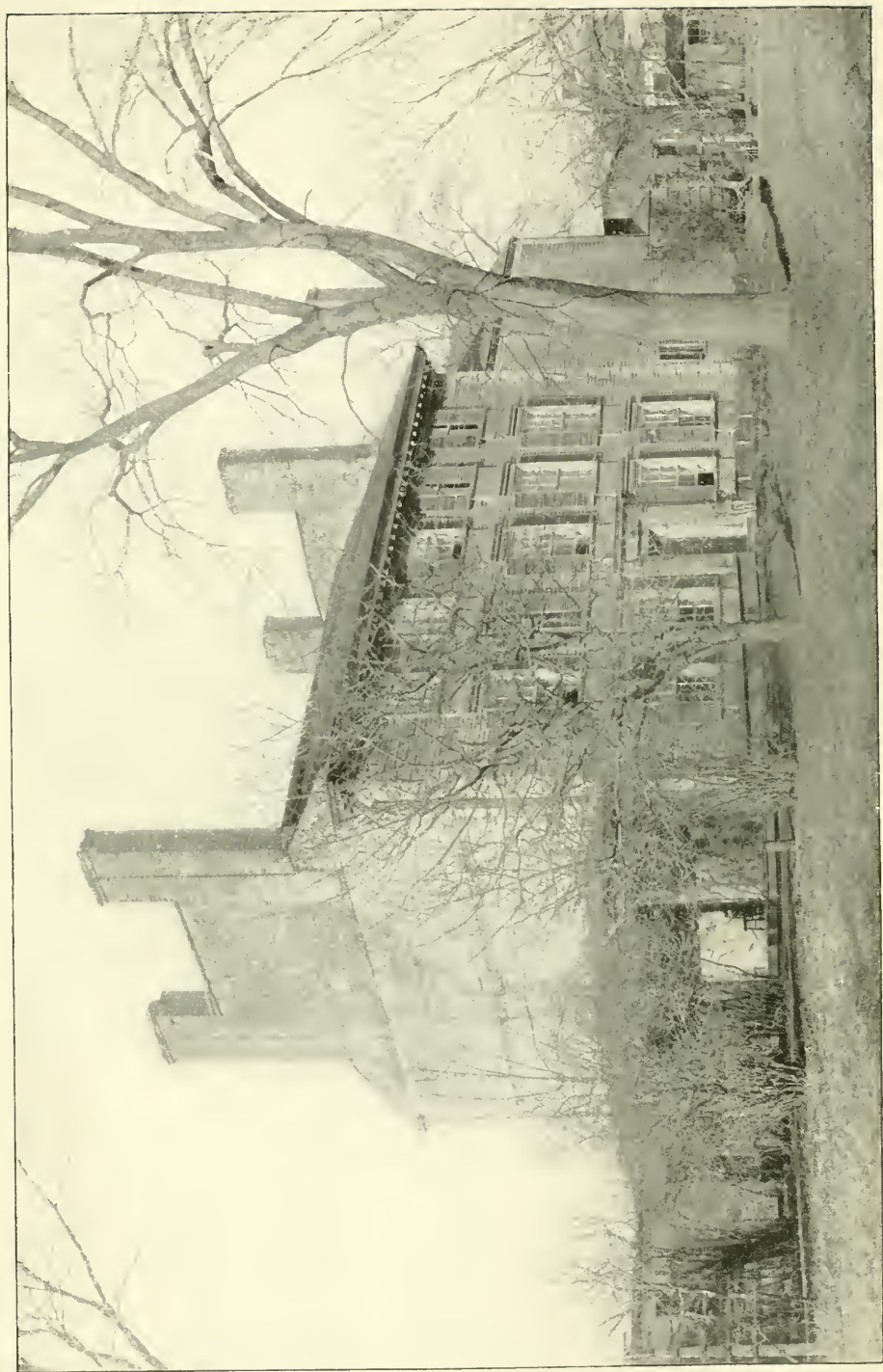
Advertising Manager, Miss E. R. ORNE.

### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_





THE ROYALL HOUSE



# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXIX.

MARCH, 1926.

No. 1.

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## THE HISTORY OF THE ROYALL HOUSE AND ITS OCCUPANTS.

By GEORGE S. T. FULLER.

[Read before Medford Historical Society, March 15, 1926.]

TALKS on old-time subjects are often more interesting to the speaker than they are to an audience, and yet I think I may be pardoned if I speak with enthusiastic pride of the house over which I have the honor to be curator at the present time, and as we recall the memories of Old Medford, and the treatment of the Hessian prisoners at the old Porter Tavern, I trust whatever I may say will not cause you to have that dry feeling so prevalent today.

However, it gives me pleasure to speak before the members of the Medford Historical Society on a subject that is so redolent of the times of one hundred and fifty years and more ago, and if I can tell you anything of interest not already known about the old Royall House, the pleasure will be mine.

Eloquently do these fine old houses of the past, charged with associations of Revolutionary days, in their silent dignity arrest our attention as we hurry by.

On our Main street stands one of the finest examples of old Colonial mansions, and we hear with pleasure the recent awakening of local authorities to their duty of withholding the destroying hand and the preservation of the grounds bordering on Main street of this historic and architectural treasure, the Royall House.

In relating the history of the Royall House and its occupants it will be well to go back to the early records

and find how these lands came into possession of the white men.

Drake's History states that "Meadford in 1630 was formerly a part of Charlestown, that honored ancestor of *all towns* of the *Mystic Valley*. In 1754 Medford was *sett* of as a separate township from Charlestown."

The title of the white man to the home of the Indians rested usually in a royal grant by turf and twig, and in the name of the English king, seldom consulting the aboriginal owner.

The territory round and about here had this royal authority, and more: —

First, in the grant of James I to the Plymouth Council of all lands between 40° and 48° north latitude and from sea to sea.

Second, by grant of the Plymouth Council, March 19, 1628, to the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Third, by royal charter of King Charles, March 14, to the Massachusetts Bay Company which confirmed the grant of 1628.

Fourth, a title not every colony could claim, a deed from an Indian sovereign.

Among the instructions from the Parent Company, written from England to Mr. John Endecott, is the following: —

"If any of the savages pretend the right of inheritance to all or any of the lands granted in our patent, we pray you to endeavor to purchase their title, that we may avoid the least scruple of invasion."

Under these instructions several deeds were received from the Indians, the one covering Medford lands being from Squa Sachem, who on the death of her husband, Sagamore John, became the chief of her tribe.

The deed reads in part as follows: "Wee Web-Cowit and Squa Sachem do sell unto the inhabitants of Charlestown all lands granted by the Court," closing with "Wee acknowledge to have received in full satis-

faction twenty and one coates, nineteen fathoms of wampum and three bushels of corne.

"In witness whereof wee have here unto sett our hands this day the 15th of the seconed month 1639.

Signed      Web Cowit  
Squa Sachem."

If all that has been written about this wild wilderness is true, it must have been a paradise to the sportsman, farmer and lover of nature, and yet the elements were very severe and many deaths ensued during the first few years.

Men left stately manors at home and took up life in this country, living in rude log cabins, felling trees and clearing ground, and never a backward look.

Probably the first white man who wandered over this part of the country was Myles Standish and his exploring party from Plymouth in 1621.

John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay Company, took up his abode on what is now Winter Hill. He was granted six hundred acres in 1631 which was named by him "The Ten Hills Farm." The record reads: "Sept. 6, 1631 granted to Mr Governor 600 acres to be sett forth by metes & bounds, near his home in Mystic to be held by him and his heirs forever."

The date of the building of the original portion of the Royall House is uncertain; some writers claim that as a farmhouse it was built in the early days of Winthrop's ownership, probably about 1637. It was a *brick* house, two and one-half stories in height, with dormer windows on the roof. When occupied by John Usher in 1690, a lean-to was added to give more room. Under the ownership of the Royalls the house assumed its present proportions. When purchased in 1732 by Isaac Royall the work of enlarging was put into the hands of his brother Jacob.

The plans were drawn in Antigua from a nobleman's house which Royall much admired and it was his wish to have an exact duplicate.

Shipbuilding being the industry of Medford, much skilled labor could be obtained, and by their handiwork and that of clever architects was produced the elegant paneling, rich cornices, fluted pilasters, doorways, and interior carvings, and the finest stairway to be found in New England — all being much admired in the present generation. The house has everything to commend it as a fine specimen of the architecture of its period. Writers spoke of it one hundred and seventy-five years ago as "the grandest house in the thirteen colonies." It won fame long before the Revolution for the strength and beauty of its construction on the outside and elaborate finish of the interior.

Beautiful grounds surrounded the house, enclosed as it was by a brick wall with an imposing gateway on the east side. An elm-shaded driveway led from old Boston road (now Main street) to the courtyard, which still shows its round paving stones. The large barn stood on what is now the corner of Royall and Florence streets. A wide, flower-bordered walk, with the favorite hedge of box, led up from Boston road under an avenue of trees to the entrance door of the house on the east side. West of the courtyard and separated from it by a garden wall was a large old-fashioned flower garden, conspicuous among the variety being hollyhocks and peonies.

Beyond the flower garden was an extensive fruit orchard with many hundreds of trees, in the center of which, on a double-terraced mound, stood the summer house, an octagonal structure of no mean design, with its Ionic columns, arched windows and carvings. Its lantern-shaped roof and eight more glass windows were surmounted by a carved figure representing Winged Mercury, which served as a weather-vane.

Five years were spent in the construction of the house, the slave quarters in the yard and other needed buildings for the family coach, horses, etc. We can realize the strong foundation on which the house stands,



with three brick walls on the north, south and east sides, and a fourth brick wall running through the centre of the house eighteen inches wide. The north and east sides are covered with clapboards, giving the passer-by the impression that it is built of wood. The west side is clapboarded under boards which were cut to represent stone and further ornamented with hand-hewn fluted columns and a beautiful doorway in the centre, with fluted pillars at the sides and a curved arch at the top. The door opens onto the courtyard. The east side of the house was designed to represent four marble pillars extending from the ground to the roof of the three-storied mansion, while its entrance doorway is made to represent cut-marble blocks, and the corners of house are quoined to look like stone work.

Having viewed the exterior of the house, we use the brass knocker of lion design and gain admittance to the lower hall, running through the entire width of the house, finished with a high paneled wainscot on one side and the beautiful white stairway on the other. The stairs and balustrade lead to the second floor and the balusters are carved in three patterns for each tread, while the newel post combines all three with a spiral on the outside and is particularly graceful. At the foot of the stairs is a broad arch with carved ornaments.

Leading from the hall to the left is the dining-room, its dark-beamed ceiling giving it a warm and homelike appearance and the white paneled walls giving a cheerful tone. The old china closets with their treasures of other days need more than a passing glance.

Across the hall from this room are the east and west parlors, showing furniture of Colonial days. On the wall near the door is a copy in oil painting of Isaac Royall, Jr., the original of which was drawn by Robert Feke in 1741 and hangs in Langdell Hall at Harvard College, having been given them by young Isaac. In the west parlor are seen the deep recessed window seats framed by beautiful arches which suggest a still more

ancient architecture. The panelled walls are wonderful in themselves, several panels being of extreme width, one of them being of white pine forty-three inches wide.

As we look at the massive front door, our eye is attracted by the hand-made strap hinges of the H. and L. variety, quaint reminders of the days when they were believed to be instrumental in keeping out witches, because they formed the initials of "Holy Lord." We also notice the cross on the doors, said to be an additional protection. As we go up the easy stairway we enjoy the broad treads which were built on the plan that a tread must be twice the width of the riser.

Over the west parlor is the marble chamber, so-called, on account of its Corinthian columns surmounted by carvings of exquisite beauty. In its prime this room was beautifully furnished, and with its high four-posted bedstead and other furniture in 1740 was valued at over three hundred pounds.

Every room in the house had fireplaces with tiles in different colors and designs brought from Holland. The "blue room" on the second floor was so called from the color of its blue scriptural tiles. On the third floor the spinning garret is of noteworthy interest, reminding us of days when clothing for the household was spun and woven in the home. Over all is the great attic, with its heavy beams still holding up the roof, most of them seven and eight inches square, and it might well be the home of spooks, as the name of Hobgoblin Hall was given it by the generals of the Revolutionary War—at that time being used as headquarters at the request of George Washington.

#### SLAVE QUARTERS.

The Slave Quarters, which housed Isaac Royall's retinue of servants, twenty-seven in number, may still be seen in the yard and in a good state of preservation. The out-kitchen of brick with its latch-string always out, still shows the massive fireplace, ten feet across its beam,

and brick oven where the food was cooked and carried to the home dining room to be served.

Isaac Royall, Sr., died in 1739. The title then passed to Isaac Royall, Jr.

When the estate was appraised in 1740, it was valued: House at 50,000 pounds and land at 37,000 pounds, making a total of 87,000 pounds, and well may it be said that the owner was one of the richest men, if not the richest man, in the Colonies.

Such was the home of Col. Isaac Royall, a man more sinned against than sinning, in the opinion of many writers.

#### ROYALL FAMILY.

Isaac Royall's ancestors were genuine Colonists and shared the trials and tribulations of the people of those days. The name of Royall appears in the early records and has been perpetuated in various localities.

William Royall of England was granted a tract of land in Salem in 1629. A son, William, Jr., was born in 1640.

Isaac Royall, Sr., whose wealth built and made famous our Royall House in Medford, was his grandson, born in Yarmouth on Casco Bay, Maine, in 1672. At the early age of three years his parent (William, Jr.) moved to Dorchester, Mass., because of continuous troubles with the Indians in Maine.

Young Isaac, as he grew older, developed a love for the sea and took frequent trips from Dorchester to the West Indies, where he finally married and made a home, amassing great wealth as a planter and merchant.

Isaac Royall, Jr., was born in Antigua in 1719, and a sister, Penelope, in 1724. The father realizing that his children could not receive the education in Antigua that he desired, sought for them his native land and placed them in a school in Dorchester. He then looked about the country for a suitable site for a home. The Mystic river and its adjacent lands appealed to his fancy, and in June, 1732, he purchased five hundred acres of the Ten Hills

farm land and began the erection of the Royall House—which appears today on the exterior identically the same as it did when completed after five years of faithful labor, neither time nor money being spared to make the house one of beauty and grandeur.

The hospitality of the Royall House was known far and wide, and we may be sure that the cellaret would be amply supplied and the hearty old-time greeting dealt out with no niggardly hand.

Isaac Royall, at the age of sixty-seven, died in his beautiful home in Medford, June 7, 1739, and was buried in the family tomb in Dorchester cemetery at Upham's Corner. Isaac Royall, Jr., then fell heir to his father's estate, at the age of twenty years. A few years later he married Elizabeth McIntosh of Surinam, South America. For many years the mansion was the rallying place of social life, and no one of importance thought of passing by without stopping to pay their respects to Colonel Royall and family. He was actively interested in the Colonies, a member of the Provincial Militia, and in 1761 was made Brigadier Général, the first of that title among Americans.

From 1743 to 1752 he served as Deputy to the General Court and regularly returned his salary to the town for the poor. For twenty-two years he was a member of the Governor's Council. Sixteen years he served as Chairman of the Selectmen of Charlestown, and when his estate was set off to Medford he held the same offices. In 1763 he was appointed on a committee of three to purchase by subscription the first fire engine in Medford, named "The Grasshopper," which was sold in 1848 for \$20.00.

Although many of his friends were Loyalists, he was a member of the People's Church, King's Chapel, in Boston, and a pew owner of our own First Parish Church in Medford, to which he gave a number of pieces of communion silver. It is now in custody of the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston, the whole valued at \$10,000.

By will he left property to Harvard College, which, when sold, founded the Harvard Law School, at his request, and was called the "Royall Professorship of Law."

There was also a clause in his will that provided for a hospital for the poor and infirm of Medford or Cambridge, the poor of Medford to have the preference.

Much has been said about his leaving Medford at the opening of the Revolutionary War. These were the conditions which led him to take the step which he later regretted: On Sunday morning, April 16, 1775, he went to church at King's Chapel, Boston, as usual. At the close of the service General Gage of the British army placed an officer at the church door to inform those who had homes outside the limits of Boston that they would not be allowed to return to their homes until after the uprising of the Colonies had been subdued.

Thus by force of circumstances he was kept from his home. He remained a week around Boston and then boarded a vessel going to Halifax and later went to England, where he died in 1781, after trying for several years to be allowed to return to his home in Medford.

He was held in high esteem by the townspeople. The Committee of Safety were his friends and he probably would never have been disturbed had he remained at home, but the reputation of a previous occupant of the older part of the house was held against *him*. The house, while occupied by John Usher, was a favorite place of assembly for the Tories and Loyalists of Boston.

The estate was confiscated in 1775 by the Colonies but was not sold. Gen. John Stark of New Hampshire, who commanded the New Hampshire troops in this section, occupied the house until after the Evacuation of Boston. Generals Lee and Sullivan were also stationed here during the war, and there is no doubt that at times General Washington made his headquarters here. From a look-out on the roof between the huge



chimneys Mollie Stark watched the Evacuation of Boston, March 17, 1776.

Occupants of the Royall House since the Revolutionary War were, in 1778, Colonel Cary of Charlestown, at a rental of two hundred pounds per year.

On account of Isaac Royall being an absentee from the Colony, his estate was held by the Colony until disposed of in 1804.

In 1779 the General Court ordered all confiscated estates to be sold, but Royall's was not on the list, and later on the estate was turned back to the heirs for \$1.00.

In 1790 William Woodbridge kept a boarding and day school in the house; having at one time forty-two boys and ninety-six girls.

The estate was sold by the heirs in 1804 to Robert Fletcher for 16,000 pounds. It then passed into the hands of William Welsh of Boston, who in 1810 sold it to Francis Cabot Lowell, and two years later it was sold to Jacob Tidd for \$9,000. After the death of Mr. Tidd his widow, who was a sister of William Dawes, lived here for fifty years, up to the time of the Civil War in 1860, since which time it has been occupied by various families until 1905, when the Royall House Association was organized. Much credit is due to the Sarah Bradlee Fulton Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, for their conception and active interest to preserve the house. The association purchased the mansion with its slave quarters and three-fourths of an acre of land surrounding it.

Old trees planted by the Royalls still shade the roof and peonies blossom in the flower beds.

Few houses can boast of such a succession of eminent owners, and not many have stood for nearly two centuries with so few changes in appearance.

“ The mellowing shrine of Medford's memories,  
The Royall House broods silent in the sun  
Like an old mother, with ripe heart of love,  
Dreaming of future and of days long done.

“ Still echo in her, melodies of yore —  
The throbbing tramp of eager patriot feet,  
The thud of loom, the whirl of spinning wheel,  
The song of women, children’s voices sweet.

“ Today to tramping feet, to wheels of toil,  
She listens tranquil in her life’s new lease,  
And to the future links her old refrain  
Of love and hospitality and peace.”

---

### THE OLD POWDER HOUSE.

Among the recent accessions of our Society’s library we find a newspaper clipping entitled “ The Old Wayside Mill.” It bears no date and is evidently from some local paper of over thirty years ago. It describes a structure well known to Medford people by sight, but not within our city’s bounds.

Historian Brooks (in 1855) alluded to it thus : —

When the circular stone windmill, now standing on Quarry hill in Somerville, was built, the inhabitants of Medford carried their grain there. Before the Revolution the mill was converted into a powder house and has been used as such to our day.

Just what he meant by “ our day ” does not appear. Mr. Usher added no information and little mention has ever been made of it in the REGISTER, which now for almost the first time varies from its course of Medford almost exclusively.

It is well to remember that until 1754, Medford was a small town lying four miles along but one side of Mystic river. We have always had a curiosity (which probably will never be entirely satisfied) as to why our boundary line beside old Charlestown was made so remarkably crooked, and right here we may well recall that a piece of the *middle* of Charlestown was cut out and incorporated as Somerville in 1842.

The newspaper clipping referred to closed thus : —

Sir Walter Scott has said, nothing is easier than to make a legend. We need not invent, but only repeat one of which the Old Mill is a subject.

This clipping proved to be a reprint or copy of Chapter V of "Fields and Mansions of Middlesex." (S. A. Drake, 1874.)

Referring our readers to the above book we will only quote:—

Except that the sides of the edifice are somewhat bulged out, which gives it a portly, aldermanic appearance, and that it shows a few fissures in its outward crust, the Powder House is good for another century if for a day. Nothing is wanting but its long arms, for the Old Mill to have stepped bodily out of a canvas of Rembrandt or a cartoon of Albert Dürer. It carries us in imagination beyond seas to the banks of the Scheldt,—to the land of burgomasters, dikes and guilders.

It was left to us to find in another quarter the legend. In an "occasional" paper styled the "Old Powder House," printed for a church fair in 1878, was *A Legend of the Old Mill*, by Mrs. L. B. Pillsbury,—in all thirty-two verses. That writer (unlike the former one) had the grace to append a footnote, thus:—

Suggested by the facts given in Drake's "Fields and Mansions of Middlesex."

As the eviction of the Acadians from Grand Pré was in 1755, and the sale of the old mill to the province for a powder house in 1747, there is room for doubt of the legend. But the writer certainly followed Drake's prose in poetic form. Our space forbids its reproduction but we quote its finale:—

In tones of thunder, a voice from below—  
 "Let go of that cord, I say, let go,  
 Or you are a dead man,"—too late! too late!  
 For e'en as the word of alarm was spoke,  
 The silent old mill with avenging stroke  
 Out of its lethargy suddenly woke,  
 And Dick Wynne, the debauchee, had met his fate.

Mangled and bleeding, with tender care  
 They bore out the dying man into the air,  
 Back to the house where so late he had stood  
 So conscious of power and haughty of mien,  
 While in tears, o'er his suffering couch was seen  
 The sorrowful face of the fair Claudine,  
 True type of forgiving womanhood.

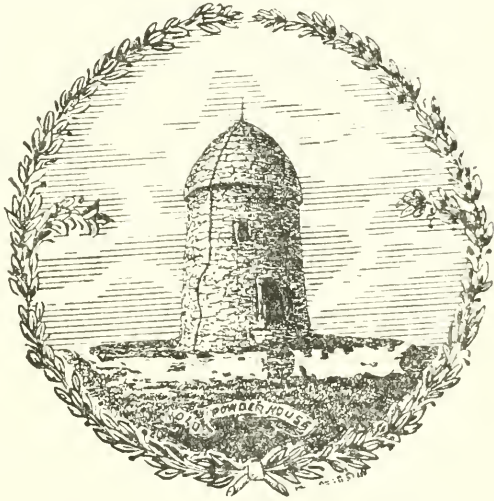


At last the pale lips of the sufferer stirred ;  
 They listened intently for his dying word ;  
 But the awe-stricken group at his bedside heard  
 Naught but the faint murmured name Claudine,  
 For the mighty waves of a broader sea  
 Than the maiden dreamed of, had set her free,  
 Lay in wide expanse their lives between.

What truth do we garner, what moral glean,  
 From this traditive tale of the tower so gray?  
 Was it chance, the grasp of that reckless hand?  
 Or, was that wild clutch of the fatal band  
 An act of retributive wrath foreseen?  
 Was the old mill an avenger of wrong that day?  
 Who shall answer the question, yea or nay?

In *Historic Leaves* (published by Somerville Historical Society) in 1903, Florence Carr has an interesting article of six pages on the Mallet family, tracing its Huguenot origin and its connection with the old mill. Mrs. L. F. A. Maulsby also gives in a Somerville souvenir a brief account illustrated by a cut of the old mill with its sails and the long inclined beam with the wheel at its end, upon the ground. The old gravestone of John Mallet in Charlestown cemetery is also shown. We commend a reading of these which are in the Society's library.

This ancient structure was probably built very soon after John Mallet's purchase of the site in 1703-4, and is mentioned in his will (1720) which devised it to his two sons. Its walls are two feet thick and built of the blue (slate) ledge stone, probably quarried from the hill close by, over two centuries ago. While used as a mill its surmounting roof was mounted on some kind of tracks



and could turn around for its sails to face the wind, which was its motive power. When no longer thus used, the roof was permanently fixed in its present form. From that time (about 1750) the public's interest in it is that of its being the powder magazine of the province. Medford had taken alarm and removed its powder elsewhere just before the visit of the British troops, who removed the two hundred and fifty half-barrels it contained to Boston.

We cannot say when it was last used for safe storage of powder, but remember that our first sight of it (except from the railway cars) was in summer of 1861 as we walked up from Central street to "Camp Cameron," near Cambridge line, where is now Holland street in West Somerville. The large three-story house of Tufts stood on the opposite corner and bore a sign "Somerville House," indicating its use as a tavern. A small dwelling and barn were near the powder house, from whose roof the stars and stripes were flying. The old stone quarry was plainly visible. The land southward was entirely vacant and open as far as the Boston & Lowell railway track where was a little flag station called Willow Bridge. The triangular space between the railroad, Menotomy road and present Warner street was partly in Medford and was fenced into cattle pens and had one small structure on which was painted *Medford Cattle Market*. One day each week was there for years a busy one. Aaron Sargent in *Historic Leaves* tells of Broadway (the Menotomy road) in 1842, when Somerville came into being, naming the then existing houses, and only named two between Medford street and Menotomy river,—the Tufts house and that of Russell, far away on the western slope of Walnut hill.

So the old mill and powder house stood in lonesomeness when the "Somerville House" was destroyed by fire, leaving its massive chimneys as gaunt reminders. Across the railroad track in Medford was erected the Willow bridge house, which accommodated the drovers

and cattlemen who came down from the north weekly. After the departure of the cattle market to Brighton this house remained in its decadence till during last year it was torn down and a big modern garage there erected. Equally lonely was the tract beyond Quarry hill till in 1869 the Boston & Lowell railroad laid its tracks from Somerville junction to its purchased Arlington and Lexington road. A little village called West Somerville began to grow around the railway station and extend itself compactly to Cambridge line and up onto both Spring and Walnut hills. In the late sixties a little chapel was built near the entrance to the old quarry. Removed toward Davis square for a time, it was brought back again, and later moved down and across Broadway, somewhat enlarged and used as a "Union Chapel," till the erection last fall, just beside it in Medford territory, of the present creditable structure recently opened for public "Assembly of the Brethren." But College avenue is not now without its houses of worship, as six have been there erected, the latest being of stone with its parish house styled "the House beside the Road." College avenue has been extended across the Sorrelly plain and famous Two-penny brook into Medford over the Southern division of the railroad by the once famous Stearns estate and Royall house and ends at Cradock schoolhouse on Summer street.

Warner street is the Somerville end of Medford's Harvard street and just over the line in Medford is St. Clement's church, parochial residence and school.

Powder House boulevard has also been constructed beside the college area, and over and around the hill to where Mystic valley parkway crosses the Menotomy river. The new West Somerville has grown till it so completely adjoins Medford hillside that the city boundary is difficult to find today even by some of Somerville's officials.

Drake wrote, the old stone tower "had three stages or lofts, with oaken beams of great thickness," and "strange

that edifice created to sustain life should become the receptacle of such a death dealing substance as powder." There came another turn in the cycle of events. In the seventies, a big shed over a hundred feet long, from beside the railroad at Willow bridge, was cut into three parts and moved near to the old powder house and made into the canning and pickle establishment of George R. Emerson, who lived in the little dwelling beside it. His farm was on the ground and his "finished products" bore the label, Old Powder House Brand, and with good reason, as before shipment they were stored within the sturdy walls of the old stone tower.

The city of Somerville is its present owner and has well preserved it and created a beautiful forest park about it, developing a beautiful residential section of the city close to its borders, even now finding the pressure of business at its busy corners. But the central dominant figure is the old wayside mill, the circular stone tower erected for John Mallet two centuries and more ago.

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#### ASSAILER OF TRADITION.

Such is the name applied to our city's Committee on Historic Sites (of 1905) in a recent article on Medford in *Boston Herald*, which contains this "engaging tradition":—

On the occasion of the launching of each ship there was placed in Medford square an open hogshead of rum, to the brim of which hung tin cups, wherewith and whereby the populace might indulge themselves *ad lib* and *ad infinitum*, according to their capacity.

To the editor, fifty-six years a resident, now one of three surviving "assailers of tradition," the above quotation is a novelty and is not credible.

We still emphasize James Hervey's trite saying, "If we are to be historical, let us tell the truth." We also add that while fiction often reads interestingly, a little common sense is also eminently desirable.

**MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY.****OBJECTS.**

The objects of this Society shall be to collect, preserve and disseminate the local and general history of Medford and the genealogy of Medford families; to make antiquarian collections; to collect books of general history, genealogy and biography; and to prepare, or cause to be prepared from time to time, such papers and records relating to these subjects as may be of general interest to the members.

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**Officers for the Year 1926.****President.****EDWARD J. GAFFEY.**

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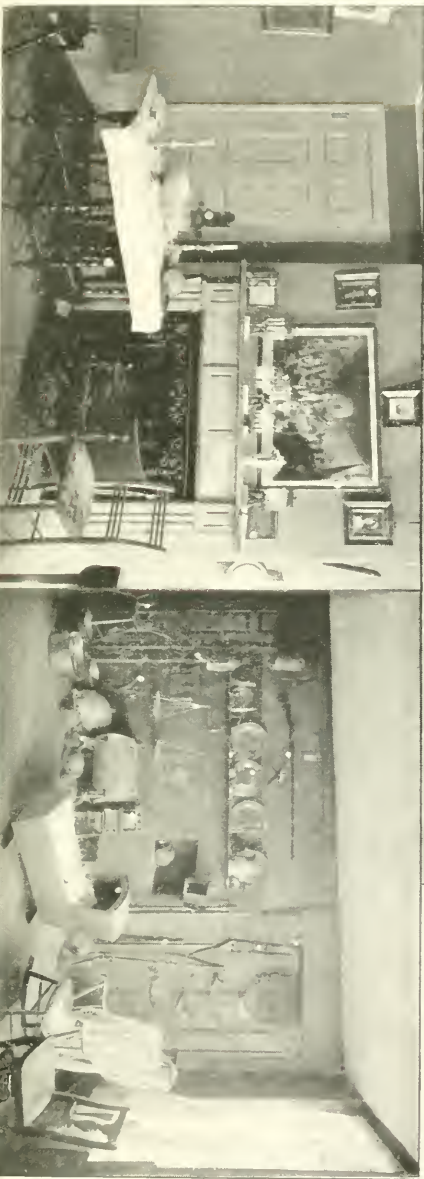
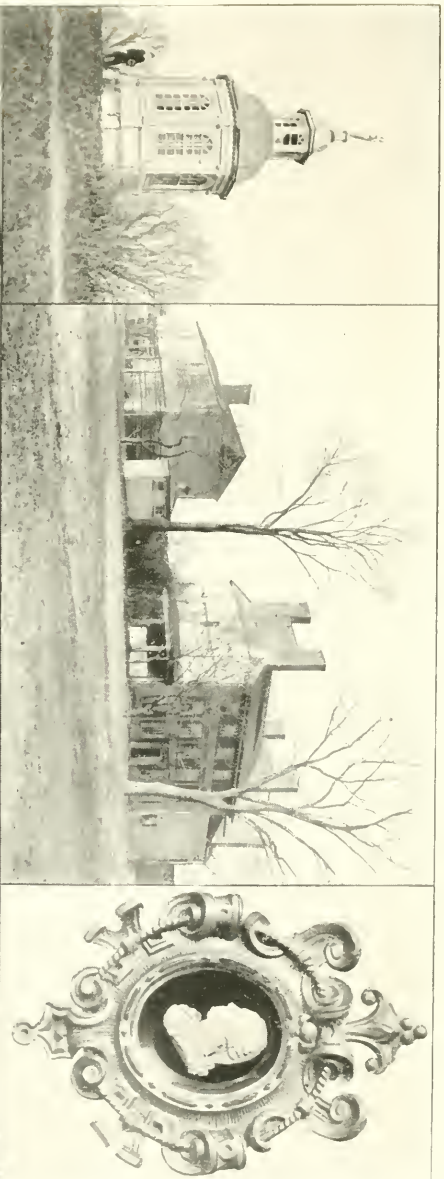
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Summer House

Front Parlor

Slave Quarters and Royall House

1791

Royall Medallion

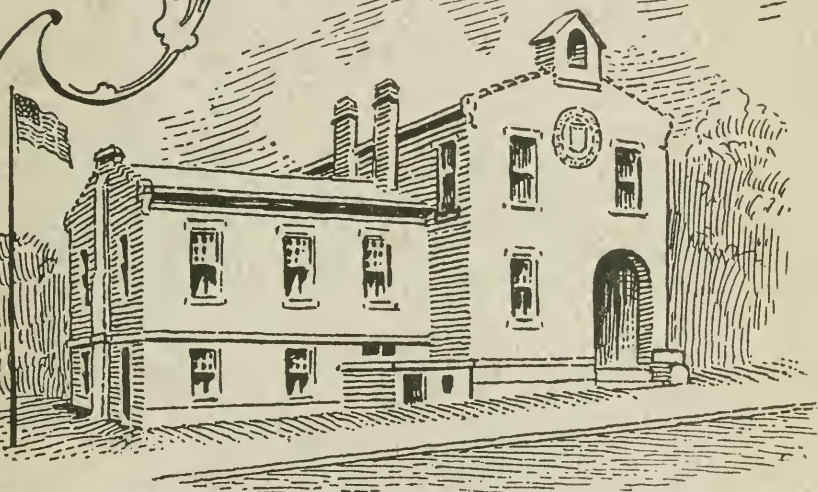


Vol. XXIX.]

[No. 2.

# HISTORICAL REGISTER

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June, 1926

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December).

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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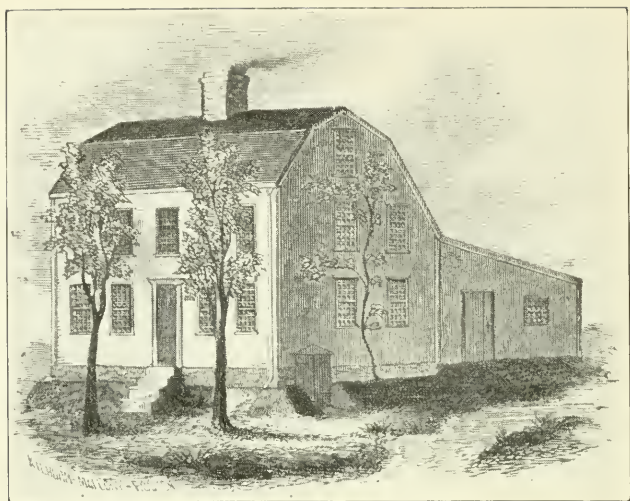
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I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
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the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_







WHITMORE HOUSE, 1680-1840



HOLTON HALLS, 1897-1924. NOW SAGAMORE COMMUNITY HALLS

# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXIX.

JUNE, 1926.

No. 2.

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## FIN DE SIÈCLE.

NEARLY a century ago (to be precise, at April town meeting, in 1829), Medford people decided that their highways should have distinctive names, and directed the selectmen to suitably designate them.

Medford square was then known as the market-place, and though nearby were several rum distilleries, the pump in the square supplied man and beast with nature's own beverage, and was the starting point of three principal roads of the baker's dozen the selectmen named. The first was "from the town pump, *west* to Charlestown line, High street; second, *east* to Malden line, Salem; and third, *south* to foot of Winter hill, Main."

Three streets branched to the right from High street to Woburn line. Purchase (now Winthrop), Woburn and Grove.

Today only the three Hall houses below Governors avenue, the Unitarian parsonage, and the old Magoun cottage opposite remain of those standing in 1829. The present Winthrop square was then called Turell's corner. A new road had then been recently proposed which would have crossed the Playstead and Brooks estate, and also the Aberjona river, to the West Cambridge road, but instead, another was partially bought, hence its name. It made a more direct and level route to Upper Medford, and left old Woburn street to become a residential section.

Let us now look at old High street, beginning at its terminal, Charlestown line. An old resident of Medford did this for us, and his story may be found in the REGISTER, Vol. VIII, p. 44. This was Elijah B. Smith, who passed away August 16, 1903. His father, Elijah, was born in Lexington, a few years before the battle, and



came to Medford in 1810, living in a house close by the Middlesex canal on High street, where Elijah, Jr., was born in 1813.

Mr. Smith speaks of the territory between the canal and river as the "fifty-acre Payson farm," but mentioned no other buildings on its High street frontage. This farm, in the fifties, became known as the Smith estate from its then owner, Thomas P. Smith.

He mentions a small house, opposite his father's, of Spencer Bucknam (in other occupancy), which was torn down. Also another at corner of Grove street that was later moved, and in which Mr. Brooks' gardener lived. As his recollection begins with 1820, this is indicative of the development of the Brooks estate. Evidently that house remains (the farmhouse long occupied by Lucien Conant), and last year was remodelled with stucco coating.

His next statement is, "an eighth of a mile further east lived Miss Rebecca Brooks—Aunt Becky." Robert Caldwell lived in her house and carried on the farm, *i.e.*, what he styled the Payson farm. The Fuller plan of 1854 shows the outline of this house, and also the one-hundred-foot barn in which was later the gymnasium of Mystic Hall Seminary. This was at the site of present Brentwood Court, and "Aunt Becky's" house was later the residence of Mrs. Smith, and one of the seminary buildings Elijah Smith alluded to.\* He also stated that "nearly opposite, Miss Brooks' brother Caleb lived on the site of present railway station." As he told this in 1903 and the present station was built in 1891, and this house is shown on the Fuller plan of 1854, it indicates some later changes. This was his *only* allusion to the railroad, which was opened in 1835, and whose first station house, "Medford Gates," was on the east of the tracks, near High street.

He mentioned next "the house owned by Leonard Bucknam, occupied by his brother-in-law, Eleazer Usher;

\* See illustration, REGISTER, Vol. XI, No. 3.

and just below the Usher house lived Deacon Amos Warren. Warren street was cut through his farm and named in his honor."

We have been thus explicit in quoting Mr. Smith's words, as they are good history. He began his account with Wear bridge, which in his boyhood was at the Charlestown line the Medford selectmen named as the end of High street.

Mr. Smith mentioned no other house across High street till that of Major Gershom Teel, later that of Captain Joseph Wyatt. This was at the corner of Canal lane.

An event has recently occurred there which has caused much comment — the moving of a dwelling house from 422 High street to Canal street, causing several days' interruption of street-car and other travel, and curious overlooking by passers-by. The writer was several times queried by such, and not being able to answer all readily and correctly, replied, "Oh, I'm not an information pagoda today!" and got the reply, "We think you know if anybody does."

Remembering the interest with which we read Mr. Smith's story, and that in REGISTER, Vol. XVIII, p. 13, we presented High street as we found it in 1870, leads us to this writing.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUSINESS SECTION OF WEST MEDFORD.

The Eleazer Usher house was, till 1840, in the heart of this section, and was the building shown in Brooks' History, p. 217. Before it stood the great elm (a little in the road), somewhat ruthlessly removed before the street car track was laid. The date of its erection is put at 1680. It was probably moved, at about 1840, across the street to the site of the present post office. In 1870 it was occupied by John C. Hatch, and for many years after by Daniel K. Richardson, stable keeper and policeman. It then stood about two rods from the Wyatt

house. Its removal was probably caused by the erection of the new dwelling of James Madison Usher, who was born in the old Whitmore-Usher home in 1814.

This new house with its stable was shaded by many trees, enlarged in 1871, and was enclosed by a massive front fence. In May, 1870, only one little one-story building stood on the angular lot opposite it. At that time Ellis Pitcher had a grocery in the Mystic Hall building and was postmaster. Up beside the freight track R. K. Carpenter did granite cutting. Pitcher sold out to Sawyer & Parmenter in June, and they to J. E. Ober in December, 1870. This was the extent of business operations then.

In the winter of 1870-71 Mr. Usher had the roof of that one-story building (in which the post office had once been) raised up and another story built in, with stairs, outside, to it. In the spring of 1871 Charles W. Macy opened in it a little store, notions, newspapers, etc.

Mr. Usher had built a small two-story house at his sand pit up Warren street and into it Edward Shaw moved and began an express route to Boston, having an order slate at Macy's. Mr. Usher next built another small store and upper room beside Macy's, into which a house painter came.

In the summer of 1871 Mr. Usher branched out some more, building in the intervening lot next the old house a one-story wooden block containing four stores. A grocery was started in two, a drug store by Amasa Beach, Jr., in one, and two dress-makers took the other. These we have named sufficed for three years.

The new grocery of Hall & Co. had but a brief run, then a fish man tried it, and in 1872 Artemas Poole, a shoe-maker, came in. Meanwhile a livery and boarding stable for D. K. Richardson had been built just beyond Whitmore brook, and Mr. Usher had begun to publish the *Medford Journal* in December, 1870.

Mr. Usher's stable was struck by lightning and burned and he replaced it by a new and larger building, which

early in 1875 he moved across High street. This caused a rearrangement. Two buildings were moved to Auburn street (just extended across the river), one half of the four-store block taken down, and the original Macy store moved next the "old Usher house" and Mr. Poole moved into it. The new stable building was made into two stores, with various rooms on second floor, and hall and ante-rooms on third, in which the Odd Fellows Lodge later found quarters. A. B. Morss established a printing office in the front room, and several parties made attempts at store-keeping. Thus far development had been east of the railroad, whose second station house, in 1854, was closely in the acute angle west of the tracks, where, until 1876, a flagman guarded the crossing.

In July, 1875, an adventurer, McNeill, began the erection of the four-story red brick block on Harvard avenue, but before completing it left for parts unknown, leaving some to mourn their losses. Then the former land owner finished the same. In this were two stores and six five-room tenements.

G. H. Spaulding & Co. opened a grocery and L. H. Lovering a market in December, 1875. A two-story building in the rear of this housed blacksmith Dean, wheelwright Morey, and upstairs, for several years, Clarkson made tinware and steam cookers. In 1875 S. S. Holton, Jr., had built a somewhat sizable stable of elaborate appearance on Holton street near his home. In this Cunningham, who had started an express line to Boston and omnibus line to Medford, and Lovering's market teams had quarters.

It had not long been completed when he followed Mr. Usher's example and moved it across the then open field to the corner of High street and Harvard avenue, making some addition to fit the obtuse angled corner. In this were finished two stores, and after the roof was raised five feet, two six-room dwellings. The part containing the horses' stalls was moved beside the railroad and much enlarged for his teaming and express business.

Next Mr. Usher (not to be outdone) enlarged his stable-store building by adding to it three more stores and a lot of upstairs rooms. During this time a new grocery went into one of the former stores, which was consolidated with the market of Lovering Brothers in the new Holton building, and Beach, the druggist, came into the other. It seemed a little singular that over the *drug* store the first tenant's name was Drinkwater.

Mr. Usher had quite an experience with varied tenants, and built a brick oven in the acute end of the cellar next the railroad. A baker, Max Fischer, came into the second store for a time, while Macy had the one over the oven. It was to this that George Delano ran the first telephone wire from his coal office in Medford up the riverbank and offered the town the use of it for fire and police calls, but found "nothing doing"—"no use for any such plaything." One day, when the Usher block took fire from locomotive sparks, Macy called Delano loudly, who repeated across the street to the bird-cage (police station), "*Fire in the Usher block!*" and got no notice taken of it. By-and-by Cunningham's bus-driver got downtown inquiring for the fire department.

Artemas Poole had bought a dwelling (the first built in 1870 on the Smith estate), and moving into it had a one-story structure built close beside the railroad. It had his shop in the rear end and a little store in front, with an array of gaily colored boxes on its shelves for about a year, when Joseph Leach came in with him and began to sell shoes.

One Bixby opened a barber's shop in the front corner of the Mystic Hall tenement, and a lodge of Knights of Honor mainly occupied Mystic Hall, and for a time the Royal Conclave of Knights and Ladies.

Daniel Lynah had a plumber's shop in the basement of the four-story block, and "Crosby's old hen-house" was moved next to it and stood there several years with various tenants, mostly cobblers. After a time Poole & Leach moved their building beside it, as a new-comer



had leased the angular corner it had occupied and erected a two-story building with flat roof and an ell of one story, and managed to squeeze four stores and an upper hall into it. Foster & Pierce opened a grocery and William Hixon an upholstery room in this.

Edward Shaw bought a lot beside Whitmore brook and erected his dwelling with a store in front and express stable in the rear. Later he built a second dwelling and an enlargement of the store, which is now the eastern limit.

The vacant space on Harvard Avenue was filled next by a three-story building of two stores and two tenements. The smaller store was called the Bee-hive, and was in charge of Miss Sara J. Blanchard. Immediately after its opening W. H. Babb opened the larger store with dry goods, and both continued in the same line. After Mr. Babb's death Poole & Leach came in.

Dr. O. A. Gamage made alterations in the house at the corner of Canal street (his father bought it in 1862), adding a small store and tenement, and later another store in the corner, in which he opened a pharmacy. His name still remains in the entrance pavement. He put in the first plate-glass in West Medford. Till then others had been content with smaller panes of "double thick."

Mr. Usher, in 1875, had a large dwelling, planned for a boarding house, erected on angular lot next Warren street. In this he lived for a few years prior to his death, when the property came into the hands of his grandson, James M. Usher, 2d. The former Usher mansion was moved in three sections up Playstead road (then opened), and the brick and stone building at the corner built, with five large stores. Into one of these came the drug store established a little earlier in the new Kakas building at Warren street by John H. Chute. Frank Born had an elaborate shoe store and someone a dry goods, while Shutz's barber shop came down from the flat-iron room over Macy's and became a "tonsorial parlor." Not content



with this, young Mr. Usher had a one-story "skyscraper" built of wood on Playstead road with five small shops in it (this but last year removed), and soon after the Ferguson building at the other end on High street — three stores in this.

After the death of S. S. Holton, in 1896, his son, known as S. S. Holton, Jr., purchased Trinity Methodist Church and moved it to the rear of his lot near the Congregational Church, raised it up some ten feet, and the parish continued to use it till December, while their new house of worship was being built. In 1897 he made alterations and enlargements, and began the erection of the brick building on Harvard Avenue. In this are three stores, various office rooms, the hall into which Mount Vernon Lodge, I. O. O. F., moved at its completion. The upper and lower Holton halls were in the rear and reached by an open-arched entrance walk. An addition to the rear of the red brick block contained a new bakery with brick oven. The red brick block was set back ten feet from Harvard avenue, this new building five feet, with granite steps from the sidewalk to basement, which extended under the arcade and to the property line, and lighted with lenses in the concrete pavement, perhaps the only instance of the kind in the city. All this plant had steam-heating apparatus, and a bowling alley was contemplated.

This whole property, extending to the railway, was for a time supplied with water from a well driven one hundred and ten feet. The pressure was such that the water came to one hundred and eleven feet in the pipe. A windmill above the buildings pumped the water into a twelve-foot circular tank, ten feet high, while a gasoline engine in the boiler room was in use if the wind failed. Somebody got the Crosby hen-house, and Poole & Leach's shop went down to the Tuttens' stone yard on Canal street. They used it for an office for some years, and at last it was acquired by Dr. Gamage, who moved it to his rear land across the street, where it still is.

Negotiations were in progress for the post office to be in this new building when Mr. Usher, 2d, forestalled matters and kept Uncle Sam as tenant by tearing down the old Whitmore-Usher house and moving the little building back beside the railway, where it stood for many years in various uses until moved against the old depot building, which had become a laundry, when, after two more years, it was torn down for firewood. Peace to its ashes.

The new building of brick which he built had stores with very large plate glass, and when completed was at once occupied. The Usher wooden block, after taking fire so many times that it acquired the name of the "only fireproof building in town," was damaged beyond repair by fire on December 24, 1921.

The house where Mr. Usher last lived was moved twice, lastly near to Warren street, and a one-story structure, with seven stores of various kinds and times of occupancy, then built.

And then came someone who began to erect another similar block on the site of that burned. The board of aldermen had in their wisdom seen fit to pass an order for widening High street. It was vetoed by Mayor Haines. Meanwhile work had been going on with much rapidity on the rear of a new building, when one day the front of the cellar wall was put in, and sections of front piers of brick begun a little outside of the former building but within the property line. Then the aldermen promptly passed the act over the mayor's veto, and a change of work resulted.

Next followed the removal of the Kent store and Wyatt-Cheney house, and the erection on the new line of a seven-store block of white cast stone—just completed.

In the latest nineties the phrase "*Fin de siècle*" was considerably employed, and in 1898 people thought the builders were "at the end of their rope" (perhaps they were financially), and remarks were made—"It is twenty years ahead of the times." Perhaps so. But now that

block is called the "Sagamore Masonic Building" and "Community Hall."

Nahum E. Wilber came as successor of Reuben Willey as station agent just prior to Mr. Richardson's appointment as postmaster in 1881. He established a little store in the depot between the waiting-rooms, a picture of which has been preserved. After the removal of the old station house to Mr. Usher's land (between the Whitmore-Usher house and the Wyatt house), Wilber moved into the "flat-iron store" next the railroad and developed an extensive business, carried on since his death by his daughter. The old railroad station became the hardware store and plumbers' shop of Dunbar & La Chapelle. Later, and still more enlarged, it became a laundry.

Duncklee & Grimes established a livery stable next Ober's, on Harvard avenue, and took over the bus-line to Medford, and when the bob-tail street car came on, their driver became its conductor. Reuben Hawes continued in this till the automobile's coming made it a garage. Further on Henry Woodward established a mason's locker, with Allen, harness maker, upstairs. Later Sidney Dean came as blacksmith and Charlton, wheelwright, while only recently Dinsmore vacated and the dilapidated shack was torn down.

About fifteen years ago the H. T. Wood house was moved and a one-story mass concrete building of four small stores erected, and was quickly followed by a community garage — these on Harvard avenue, and on the southwestern limit. At both sites the builders made the earth over, digging their sand and gravel for concrete on the spot.

To the west, on High street, only two years erected, is the brick structure of the Real Estate Trust, which has four stores and the banking rooms and vaults of the Medford Trust Company. Between this and Tyler avenue is the Land Trust office and office of Undertaker Gaffey — the western limit. The northern is on Playstead road, the printing office of Mortimer Wilber.

We have thus "swung around the circle," a cycle of over fifty-six years of personal knowledge and observation, and while writing, much aside from business within these limits has recurred to our memory. In Mystic Hall has been the Lyceum and Library Association, the Mystic Sunday School, the Christian Union. A Congregational Church was formed there, also a Universalist, and later the West Medford Baptist, and Shiloh Church for a time. Numerous caucuses and public gatherings were there convened. Brooks Commandery, U. O. G. C., and Royal Arcanum met there for several years.

The first house of worship of the Congregational parish was built in 1873 at corner of Harvard avenue and Bower street, and when burned (March, 1903) Holton Hall served for a time. St. Raphael's Church first assembled in the lower hall. Pitman's dancing academy was its first occupant, and political meetings and rallies of various kinds were held there.

One enterprise did not succeed, a photographer in the little upstairs hall next the railroad. Later some good people of extreme views held religious services, and were followed by a Primitive Methodist Church for about a year and a half.

Perhaps twenty-five tenements or dwellings have been within the described space, the number not increasing, as witness the one-story blocks later built. The fire station has moved from without to within our described bounds. Its apparatus is in marked contrast to the old two-wheeled hose carriage housed in Daniel Richardson's stable in 1871. But we remember that Spot pond water had but then just come, and that all the gas we had was of our own make and didn't illuminate. Electric light was then a dream, telephone ditto, automobile more unlikely.

Five buildings still remain to be mangled, moved or demolished to complete the widening act on High street, but Mystic Hall, built for a community center in 1852,

still remains, as does also its proprietor, Mr. Ober, ninety-two, the dean of the business men of Medford. The post office has been moved into its new quarters beside Whitmore brook. When High street was named it crossed Meeting-house and Whitmore brooks not only by bridges but by fording places. For some years the latter has had a summer vacation, but at times returns, but not to its former volume. When the street widening is complete we suggest that with the new order the locality be named Whitmore square, in remembrance of its early settler, the good Deacon John Whitmore, whose house, built in 1680, stood here till the twentieth century came. That he was a worthy citizen of the old time is seen in the text of his funeral sermon by Parson Turell.

"Mnason of Cyprus, *an old disciple with whom we should lodge.*"

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#### THE TORNADO OF 1851.

Few residents of West Medford today know of, or can form an idea of the scene of devastation and ruin presented in this now beautiful section of Medford after the tornado or cyclone of seventy-five years ago had passed through it.

Friday, August 22, 1851, was a hot, sultry, oppressive day. As the afternoon waned, the quiet was ominous. An old resident, who had been a sea captain, made remark, "If I was at sea I should expect a waterspout." Suddenly, at about quarter past five, there appeared in the west beyond Wear bridge a whirling cloud, something in shape like a spreading tree or an inverted cone. Its lower part seemed to writhe about like the trunk of an elephant, reaching toward the earth. As it came on over the river, it began its terrible work, as if with teeth and jaws of steel. Its track covered a space of about eighty rods wide, taking the general course of High street with varying force and incredible velocity.



Passing over the valley of Meeting-house brook, it continued through the woods and re-appeared on Forest street. While its general course was eastward, trees were blown in other and varying directions within the width of its track, and all sorts of freaks were later observed. A little shed or hen-house escaped, while large, strongly-built houses and barns were demolished. Others were unroofed, while chimney tops, windows, blinds and fences went like chaff before or with it.

A freight car on the railroad siding was rolled along ten rods, then lifted from the track and landed sixty feet away, where now is Playstead road.

*Gleason's Pictorial* of Boston, September 6, 1851, presented its artist's view, saying:

The locality is at the east of the West Medford station. The dismantled house on the right was that occupied by Mr. Costello. The next across the road, the dwelling of Mr. Sanford, the depot master, which was moved twenty feet, crushing beneath it his son, a young man of 19 years, who was obliged to suffer amputation of both legs. The two-story house next to it was occupied by Mr. Nye, a carpenter. It was completely unroofed. In the second story Mrs. Nye and newly-born infant, injured by the wreck. In the extreme left is Captain Wyatt's house which was completely riddled.

In one house there was pasted on the wall a variety of pictures and portraits. That of (then) President Fillmore was stripped off without fracture or injury and borne by the gale into a garden a half-mile away. Its finder restored it to the owner who replaced it. Of it, Rev. Mr. Brooks remarked, "Political prophets may tell us what this foreshadows." But President Fillmore did not succeed himself in the White House.

Mrs. Caldwell (of Irving street) took a journey on the wings of the wind and was safely set down one hundred and fifty feet away. Less fortunate was one of the workmen at Mystic street (who in 1902 visited the writer and told of his experience) on the fateful day. Living at Cambridge, he was on his way home, when he was taken up and hurled into a pile of debris from which on re-



covering consciousness he crawled, bruised and bleeding. A brakeman helped him into the baggage car, and procuring cotton waste from the engine stuffed it into his clothing and partially stopped his bleeding. Arriving at East Cambridge, he was taken home, where the surgeon removed a splinter five inches long, which, striking his thigh-bone was deflected downward. He had never been to the village since that day to make any stop, but looked over the ground somewhat and while there met a man he knew, the late Lorin L. Dame.

One person was fatally injured, Mr. Thomas Huffmaster. Struck by a joist in the breast, he died from its effect soon after. His house was on High street, corner of Allston, later that of his son-in-law, J. H. Norton.

The schoolhouse on Canal street was utterly destroyed, its floor with the seats attached laid upside down across Whitmore brook. School was to have begun on the following Monday. The big Whitmore elm escaped with little injury, but a horse-chestnut at Warren street was so wrenched and twisted as to show the effect thirty years later. Another, near by, blossomed anew in the following weeks.

The storm seemed to have begun its havoc with over \$4,000 damage in Waltham, \$23,606 in Arlington and \$18,768 in Medford.

These figures we gather from the report of a committee chosen by citizens in West Medford during the ensuing week. This report was in a neatly bound volume of seventy-two pages,—forty pages by Mr. Brooks, “in the interest of science,” eleven by the committee, and the rest relative to West Cambridge and Waltham.

Less explicit, but terse, was the reply of one of the sufferers in relating his views: “Och! sure the wurrlld has coom to an end, the houses are slivered entirely, and o’im kilt.”

In a later edition of the report was a steel engraved portrait of James Sanford. This book is very rare.

On Sunday following the disaster, Medford was thronged by many thousands who came to view the scene. The writer was among them, and though less than six years old then, still has vivid memories of wrecked buildings, uprooted and fallen trees, and of the gale at his home, five miles away. It seems miraculous that no greater loss of life occurred. Doubtless the expression made in the citizens' meeting referred to, "Now we feel ourselves called upon to acknowledge our gratitude to God for the preservation of our lives in the midst of greatest peril and danger," was heartfelt.

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#### MORE ABOUT THE POWDER HOUSE.

The following was one page of manuscript inadvertently omitted in our last issue. It should have begun at fourth line from bottom of page 11 :—

Old Charlestown was thus, like ancient Gaul, divided into three parts. The Menotomy river cut off the point of a wedge-shaped part lying between Mystic river and lakes and West Cambridge and extending westward up to old Woburn line. The residents in that section soon asked for annexation to West Cambridge, which was soon done.

The new town thus made, beginning near Sullivan Square, lay westward between Mystic river and Medford on the east and north and Cambridge on the south, extending to the Menotomy river (*alias* Alewife brook) and to Mystic river again. It had numerous hills of considerable elevation and historic interest. One of the lesser is the Quarry hill already mentioned. Old Charlestown early made a remarkable survey and record of its territory and belongings. In a book of two hundred and sixty pages it is given in third report of Record Commissioners, from 1638 to 1802. In this book is much about present Medford territory. This is now presented to complete the story, and especially to answer a query we received relative to the name Broadway.

The level land between Walnut and Quarry hills was in olden time called "Sorrelly plain." At the foot of Quarry hill was the Medford "road to Cambridge," now known as Harvard street in Medford (named Cambridge street in 1829), and as Warner street in Somerville, and after crossing Broadway, as College avenue. We have been recently asked if Broadway was always known thus. We reply "No." The earliest name we know of is "Menotomie's rode," or road to Menotomy, in varieties of spelling.

In the record referred to the location of this stone mill was in 1684, "seven acres of John Foskett, northwest on a two-pole way, and southwest by Sergeant Thomas Welch."

Welch had twenty-one acres northeast of John Foskett and southwest by the highway. A note follows which is pertinent: "Minde there is within these bounds of Welch a quarter of A acre left for A Common Quarry." So the name, Quarry hill, is reasonable.

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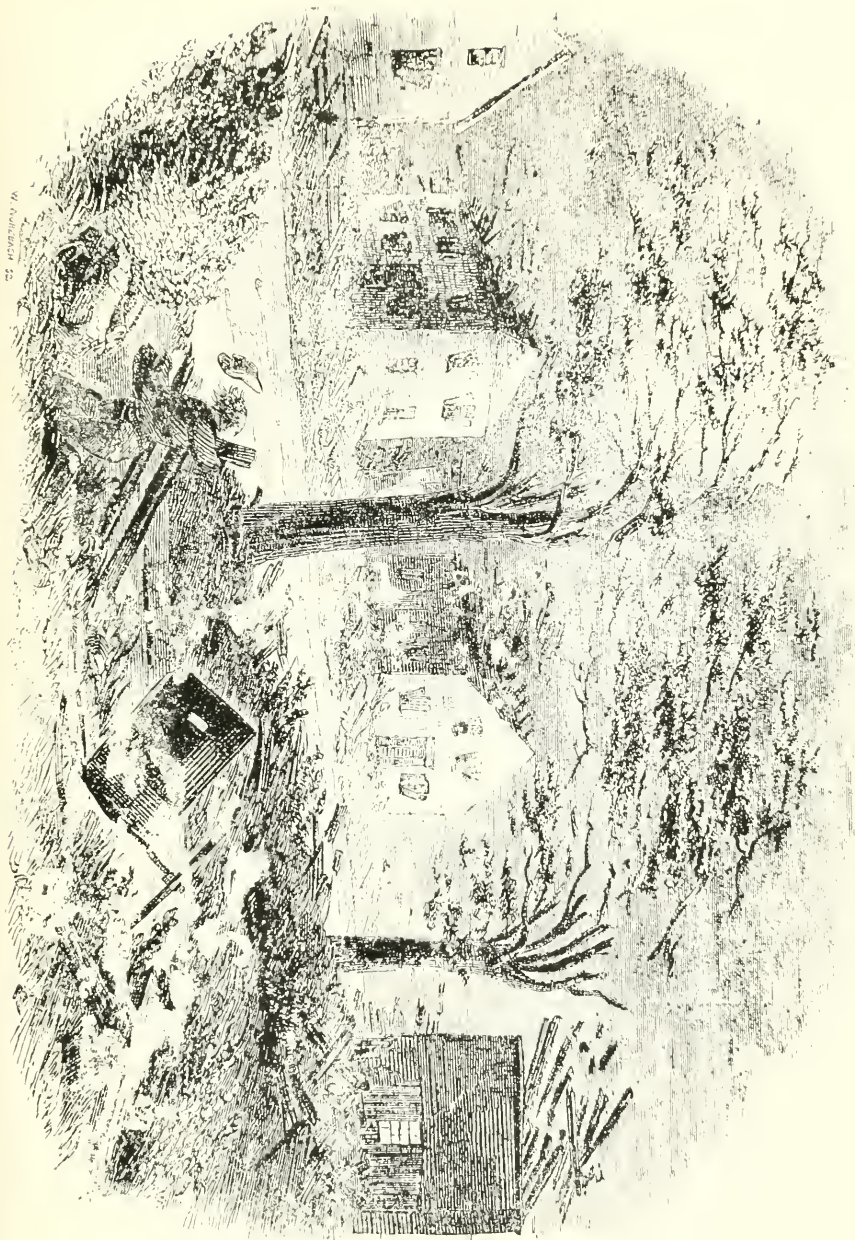
#### OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

The houses of John Whitmore, senior, and his son John, adjoined, and the latter may have been later the Amos Warren house. Both may have been moved across High street at the erection of the J. M. Usher residence, prior to 1850.

The view of Holton halls (1904), was secured prior to the erection of the fire station. Note the circular water tank (now removed). In more recent change the church tower and belfry were removed and the intervening space enclosed and walls stuccoed, now Community hall.

After the tornado, the Deacon Sanford house was moved to corner Canal and Prescott streets, where it still shows the door in end closed up.

TORNADO AT WEST MEDFORD



W. H. H. 22





Vol. XXIX.]

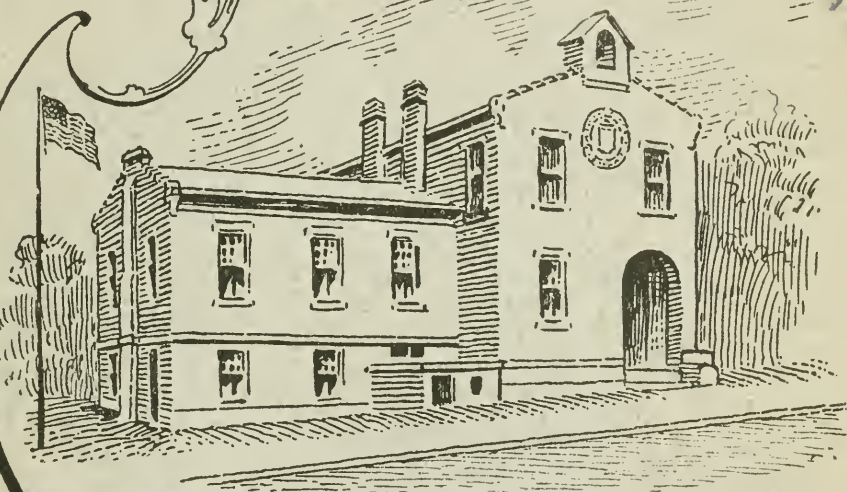
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# HISTORICAL REGISTER

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September, 1926

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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Advertising Manager, Miss E. R. ORNE.

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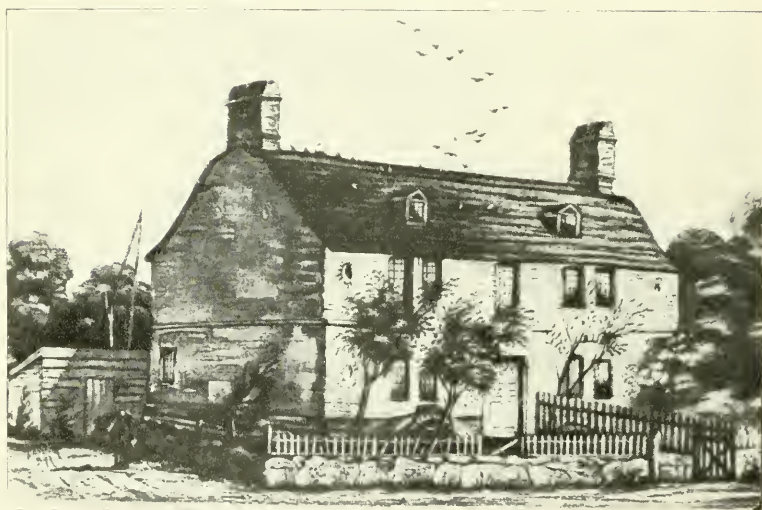
I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_





VIEW PRIOR TO 1890  
 Courtesy of Medford Chamber of Commerce



A. L. RAWSON, Del.

F. T. STUART, Sc.

COPY OF STEEL ENGRAVING. *Brooks' History*

# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXIX.

SEPTEMBER, 1926.

No. 3.

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## THE "CRADOCK" HOUSE, PAST AND FUTURE.

[Read before the Medford Historical Society by Ruth Dame Coolidge.]

THERE is something peculiarly sacred about old tradition. The halo of antiquity hangs about an old house, imbuing it with the mystery and romance of days long gone. So when the modern student ventures to dispel the haze with the rude breath of scientific criticism, he is assailed as a heretic and a vandal. About the Cradock house was such a halo, and even today, my little resume of all that I could glean about the old brick house on Riverside avenue (properly Ship street), is headed by the title of Cradock house. And in spite of all we can do or say it is probable that it will be known as the Cradock house for years to come. A lie travels a mile while truth is getting his boots on, runs the old proverb, and the tradition which apparently assumed its first form in the splendid history of Medford by Rev. Charles Brooks is more potent than the infinite accuracy of Judge Wait, Mr. Walter Cushing, so long teacher of history in our Medford schools, John Hooper and Moses Mann. Even the *Transcript*, up until 1914, published religiously every week in the Strangers' Directory, "Cradock house, Medford. Built 1634, the first brick house in the colony, and the oldest house standing in North America. Every brick was imported from England. Named from Matthew Cradock, governor of the Massachusetts Company in New England." It is hard enough for Medford to lose its shipbuilding, its rum, and now its only "oldest in America" possession.

However, much still remains. The *land*, at least, on

which the house was built, belonged to Governor Cradock, and we still have the romance of the early founding of Medford. In fact, the historians, if they destroyed the authenticity of the Cradock house, wish to lengthen the span of Medford's life by extending it backward to 1628, or 1629 at the latest. So, in their opinion at least, we are stealing a march on Boston, founded in 1630. But our city seal reads 1630, and I suppose we shall be unable to contend against that tradition also. I believe, however, that so many must feel as bewildered as I did, must know that the Cradock house is no longer the Cradock house, yet be unable to account for the change, or to build up any traditions about the polluted shrine, that I am attempting in this short talk to sum up as simply as I can some of the early traditions of Medford, and especially of the old house which we should know by the name of the Peter Tufts house.

It is not my purpose to enter into the learned historical controversy, but the history of Medford must move backward inevitably to Matthew Cradock.

Our Matthew was born in the days when Shakspeare was still living, and the romance and adventure of Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake spurred the lives of Englishmen to the real attainment of dreams. We today can hardly imagine the effect upon an ambitious lad in London of ships up the Thames from across the enchanted Atlantic discharging their treasures from newly discovered lands.

Little is known of the private life of Matthew Cradock, save that he was very wealthy, was an intimate friend of John Winthrop, and one of the prominent London citizens in the reign of James I and Charles I. He was apprenticed, as most men of business probably were, and in his case to a skinners' company in Broad street, London. So it must have been that while Cradock was a mere stripling he saw the skins valuable for their fur which were brought into London from across the seas, and must have peopled that continent of North America



with multitudes of wolves, beavers, foxes, and martens, awaiting transformation into pounds sterling. How he acquired his wealth we do not know, but he traded in all the seas. He invested two thousand pounds in Persia and the East Indies, sent ships to the Levantine, the Mediterranean and the Baltic provinces. If one could only identify him with Dick Whittington the romantic appeal would be complete. Also romantic is the very name of his first wife, Damaris.

But Cradock was apparently a shrewd and careful business man. He turned now from the east to where "westward the star of empire takes its way" and invested his money in New England. We may as well confess here, that financially the investment was probably a failure, as far as Medford was concerned, but Medford is forever the debtor of the broadminded, far-sighted merchant. In 1620 James I had granted to the Grand Council for New England all the land between forty and forty-eight degrees north latitude, straight through to the South sea. In 1628 this court granted to the Massachusetts Bay company, consisting of six persons, all the land between a line everywhere three miles south of the Charles river and a line everywhere three miles north of the Merrimac. It is to be hoped that the Charles and the Merrimac in those days ran straight and parallel. Six persons were rather a close corporation for all this land and in 1629 twenty other persons, Cradock included, were associated with them and the corporation took a charter under the title of Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay in New England. And by this charter the king constitutes "our welbeloved the saide Mathewe Craddocke to be the first and present Governor of the said Company." As Mr. Cushing, whose account I am closely following, continues to say, this company was formed primarily for purposes of trade, and to trade there must be a trading post at the other end. The first thing to do then was to found a settlement, and over this colony was to be placed John Endi-



cott as governor. Hence the existence of two governors, Cradock, governor of the company in England, and Endicott, governor of the settlement in Salem. Thus Cradock was more like the president of one of our business enterprises, and, as a matter of fact, he never saw the city of Medford or the house which so patiently bears his name.

We all know from our newspapers that Salem celebrated its tercentenary this last summer of 1926; the London company, in fact, in the year 1626 sent over a colony which settled at Nahumkeke (Salem), with a few at Cape Ann (Gloucester), and a few at Nantasket. All these, according to an article by Mr. Mann, were under the supervision of the local governor, John Endicott. Now from this colony of Salem, there were apparently some men who had come over in the interest of Cradock. It had been a pretty difficult thing to sit on one side of the Atlantic and make out grants for men on the other, and it is little wonder that grants overlapped and conflicting claims were made. There was the Plymouth plantation, then the Massachusetts Bay colony, and then north of that grant, which extended as you remember, three miles north of the Merrimac, was a grant to Mason and Gorges. The title to the land of the Massachusetts Bay colony, by virtue of its nearness to the Merrimac, might therefore be in doubt. A certain John Oldham, who claimed under the grant of Robert Gorges, was apparently also claiming a portion of this land south of Merrimac. Cradock suggested that his claim might be prevented by causing some to take possession of the chief part of this land, under the doctrine apparently, that, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." There is reason to believe, says Mr. Mann, that the farm at Mystic was planted in order to carry out this suggestion. As the General Court never granted any land in Medford to any man except Cradock, all settlers in Medford must have been bound to serve Cradock before leaving England. At all events (in the Charles-

town records, 1664), John Green, in giving a history of the first comers, says:—

Amongst others that arrived at Salem at their own cost were Ralph Sprague with his brethren Richard and William who, with three or four more, by joint consent and approbation of Mr. John Endicott, Governor, did the same summer of 1628 (1629) undertake a journey from Salem, and travelled the woods above twelve miles to the westward, and lighted on a place situate and lying on the north side of the Charles River, full of Indians called Aberginians. Their old sachem being dead, his eldest son, by the English called John Sagamore, was their chief, and a man naturally of a gentle and good disposition. . . . They found it was a neck of land, generally full of stately timber, as was the main and the land lying on the east side of the river, called Mystick River, from the farm Mr. Cradock's servants had planted called Mystick, which river led up into; and indeed generally all the country round about was an uncouth wilderness, full of timber.

So Medford was already inhabited in 1629. These men returned to Salem and made their report, and Endicott in return wrote a report to Cradock in a letter from Salem dated September 13, 1628. It took just five months for it to reach Cradock, who three days later replied to it, in a letter preserved in the archives of our own State House. This letter, which Mr. Mann has personally examined, told Endicott that

the company had been enlarged since he left England, that he had purchased another ship, and was hiring two or three more, and was about to send three hundred colonists, one hundred head of cattle, and various supplies for the colony. He also directs "there hath not bine a better tyme for sale of tymber these twoe seven yeres than at present; therefore pittye shipps should come backe emptye . . . I Wishe alsoe yt there be some sassaffras and sarsaparilla sent us, as alsoe good store of shoomacke . . . if there is to be had, as we are informed there is, the like do I wishe for a Tun weighe at leasf of silk grasse & of ought elce yt may be useful for dyinge."

One is reminded that Cradock had been apprenticed in a skimmers' company, and doubtless knew the use of dyes for fine skins. Sumach leaves were used in tanning light skins and also to some degree in dyeing. He adds: Alsoe I hope you will have good sturgion in a readiness to send us.

But what interests us still more is his direction that after reaching these shores

these "three vessels may go to the banck with 29 waigh of salt . . . lynes, hookes, knives, bootes and barvells necessary for ffishinge."

Of course, the banks had long been known for fishing, and these ships were to go to the banks en route home, but the colonists would undoubtedly want the supplies they were to use on the banks. So Cradock directs

that then you send our barke that is already built in the colony to bring back our fishermen and such provision of salt if any remainder be and also of hookes, lynes & of use to you on all occasions.

Thus out of the lips of Cradock himself a bark was already built in the colony before ever Winthrop arrived or the *Blessing of the Bay* was launched. There is no account of any ship-building in Salem, Dorchester or Nantasket, so that the presumption is strong that Cradock's men whom the Spragues had found in Medford had already started in ship-building, the better to pursue Governor Cradock's ambition in his trading colony of importing fish to England. This is, of course, another assumption, based on probability rather than proof, but the account of Sprague's and the letter of Cradock do establish the settlement at Mystic earlier than 1630 and the launching of boats in the colony earlier than the *Blessing of the Bay*.

That the company, through Cradock, knew in February, 1629, of a bark already built here, proves that Endicott must have sent word to Cradock in his letter of September, 1628, and that the probability is strong that ships were built in Medford as early as 1628 and a settlement was already established at that date. In the spring of 1629 the company sent over six shipwrights, and provisions for building ships as pitch, tar, rosin, oakum, cordage and sailcloth in all these ships, with nine firkins and two half-barrels of nails in the "*Two Sisters*, two thirds for the company and one third for the governor." These letters show that Governor Cradock,

anxious for a good trading adventure in skins, fish and curious other exports, was eager to encourage ship-building.

While Cradock was thus planning carefully ahead for the success of his trading corporation, affairs in England took a more serious turn. Parliament had been dissolved and the Puritans saw before them a period of oppression. New England became desirable more as a refuge than a trading post, and Puritan leaders were anxious to inhabit this grant of land. They were unwilling to go, however, if the control still remained in England. One sees already the same spirit which made our Medford men a century later refuse to be ruled by hands across the sea. So the company signed an agreement with the Puritan leaders, Winthrop, Dudley and Saltonstall, by which the latter agreed to transport themselves and families to Massachusetts, provided the charter went with them. By this arrangement Cradock lost his position as governor, but his interest as an investor remained the same. So in June, Winthrop landed in Salem with ten vessels, the *Arbella* as flagship, but they found Salem unsuitable and pressed on to Charlestown. But there were settlers already there. Our Puritans were exclusive. They went to Boston and found Blackstone,—one man occupying apparently the whole city. Then they scattered and explored. Winthrop sailed up the Mystic six miles and apparently liked it. So he writes later to his wife, "My dear wife, we are here in a paradise." This letter, by the way, was dated the twenty-ninth of November. Winthrop was probably an optimist. He says at another time, "Here is as good land as I have seen there, though none so bad as there. Here can be no want of anything to those who bring means to raise out of the earth and sea." Winthrop chose for himself the Ten Hills farm and built his own house near the site of the Ford factory of today. He had, however, a farmhouse for his men in Medford, the original start of the Royall house.

Imagine Medford at this time. There was the peaceful river, with the tang of the salt tides, and in Medford centre a great barn and a dwelling house erected for Cradock's men. These are indicated on early maps and references made to the great barn for many years probably about opposite Medford theatre. At the edge of the river an occasional boat lay ready for quick ferrying, though the ford which was commonly used at low tide ran across the river west of the bridge and ended behind the Armory. A rude path, following the line of the famous Indian trail, led along what is now the present location of Main street to the square and then westward along the river from High street to the weirs, or the narrows, where the Mystic ponds pour into the narrow river and where the Indians had their rude nets for fishing. The hill behind the Centre school sloped abruptly to the river, leaving a little sandy beach at the margin. Behind were the forests, except where the land had been cleared and where a park had been impaled for "Master Cradock's cattle, until he can store it with deer." One is reminded that Washington had deer at Mount Vernon, and Cradock must have thought perhaps of the English country parks. Near the center of the present Medford square was a little pond, large enough for ducks to take shelter in passing.

What manner of houses would be built by these first settlers? Our modern historians answer quite conclusively, wood. Bricks were made in the colonies at an early date, and we find Winthrop building himself a stone house, and though it apparently was not built on sand, yet a storm arose, and as the stone was laid with clay, for want of lime, two sides of it were washed down to the ground. Brick houses of the type of the Cradock house are signs of more settled times. It is probable, also, that the men of Cradock would settle directly on the line of travel, near the ford and the Indian trail. Of course, they probably would barter skins with the Indians, as was the custom everywhere, and they might



ship them via Salem or Boston. But more decisive than probability is the proof afforded by some old maps.\* On one map of about 1633, the way from Mistick ford to Salem is indicated by two dotted parallel lines, and the farmhouse of Mr. Cradock is located between the way and the river. The word "Meadford" appears close beside the house, and in the margin, said to be in the handwriting of Governor Winthrop, are the words "Meadford. Mr. Cradock's ferme house." In a second very careful map of Mr. Winthrop's Ten Hill farm, dated October, 1637, the Cradock farmhouse is located as on the first map. Neither map shows any indication of a house near the present "Cradock" house, which is remarkable in the sparsely settled condition of the colony, if the house were really standing at that time. This house in Medford square then was probably the residence of Cradock's agents, where all the business of the colony was transacted. It was without doubt the meeting house and the tavern. According to the indication afforded by the maps it was close to the present Garrison house, behind the savings bank, while the great barn was probably on Salem street, about opposite the Medford theatre. A deed of 1722 mentions "the place where the great barn formerly stood, bounded north upon the country road to Malden." It was apparently a landmark. It was probably one hundred feet or more in length, with a lean-to. The location of this great barn, as recognized by later deeds, accords exactly with the Ten Hill farm plan of 1637, and was undoubtedly the Cradock barn. The brick house now standing on the hill back of the savings bank was built by Major Jonathan Wade after he came into possession of his estate under his father's will. In the year 1692-93, Mrs. Elizabeth Wade, widow of Major Wade, petitioned the Court of General Sessions of the Peace for an abatement of taxes assessed upon the Wade

\*See HISTORICAL REGISTER, Vol. I, No. 4: "Maps of Medford of Different Periods," by William Cushing Wait, and "Governor Cradock's Plantation," by Walter H. Cushing.



estate by the selectmen of Medford, claiming that by reason of sickness and also by reason of his (Major Wade's) great charges in building the personal estate was very much reduced. This would seem to indicate the great charges were incurred in building the brick house. This house and the Peter Tufts house, and probably the part of the old house at the corner of High street and Hastings lane, the Deacon Bradshaw house, are only houses standing today that were standing in 1690.

Medford was practically a private plantation owned by two men, Cradock on the north and Winthrop on the south. By the General Court both had access to the weirs at Mystic lakes, where vast quantities of smelts and alewives swarmed in season. I can remember myself when the alewives in early spring darted up Meetinghouse brook. By a grant of the Court, also, "all the land betwixt the lands of Mr. Nowell & Mr. Wilson on the East, and the partition betwixt Mystic ponds on the west, bounded with the Mystic river on the south and the rocks on the north is granted to Mr. Matthew Cradock merchant to enjoy to him and his heirs forever." In 1636, the indefiniteness of "the rocks on the north" was changed to read, "a mile into the country from the river side in all places."

If Cradock owned practically all of Medford north of the river, he was a generous and responsible landlord. Yet he was greatly tried by the shortcomings of his agent. He complains pathetically in January, 1637, in a letter to Winthrop:—

The greyffe I have beene putt to by the most vyle bad dealings of Thomas Mayhew hath & doeth so much disquiet my mind as I thanke God neuer any thing did in the lyke manner.

And again:

Most extremely I am abused. My seruants write they drinke nothinge but water & I haue in an account lateley sent me Red Wyne, Sack & aquavita in one yeere aboue 300 gallons besides many other to intollerable abusss, £10 for tobacco," etc.

These quotations were made by Mr. Cushing with his usual humorous acumen from the Colony records. It is very characteristic of Cradock, however, that, imposed upon as he was, unsuccessful as he was, he developed his land with steady perseverance, building the Cradock bridge, offering fifty pounds toward the support of Harvard College, and in 1640, the year before his death, writing:

I have great cause to acknowledge God's goodness & mercy to me in inabling me to undergoe what I have & doe suffer by New England, & . . . if my heart deceyve me not, I joye more in the expectation of that good shall come to others there when I shall be dead and gone then I greyre for my owne losses, though they have beene verry heavey & greate.

So much for Matthew Cradock, the founder and patron of Meadford, whose interests in the new colony also stretched from Marblehead to Shaweshynne and Watertown. And so far, I have touched only on what he probably built; and left still unsettled the question of the Peter Tufts house—where the heretics and vandals aforesaid began their devastating work.

After the death of Cradock, in 1641, the little colony languished. The support of the early governor was withdrawn, and as the land was largely in control of non-resident owners, the burdens of taxation were difficult. There was nothing resembling a town government. But after the death of Cradock, as his holdings began to be sold out in parcels, the inhabitants of Meadford were held responsible for repairing their highways and the bridge over the Mystick. The difficulties arising from these various problems caused an informal gathering of owners and a rudimentary town government was formed; a "*peculiar*," the General Court called it. Mr. Mann went to the State house and various places of authority, to determine what technically a "*peculiar*" was, and defined it at last as did our former city clerk, Allston Joyce, "as parish, precinct or district, not yet erected into a town, but having authority to act on most local legisla-

tion but not to choose a representative to the General Court." This peculiar condition of Medford lasted until 1674, when Medford had her first recorded town meeting. Under such conditions there is little in the recorded history except contentions with Charlestown, Woburn, Reading and Malden in regard to the upkeep of the bridge. Our annals are indeed peculiar in being free from the excitement of war and danger. The Indians were peaceful and conciliatory. Winthrop and Cradock both took exceptional pains to obtain grants of land, legal in the sight of the Indians as well as in that of the King. As far as early legends may have arisen concerning the necessity of garrisons or forts, with overhanging second stories for defence, or cannon holes for use of muskets, there is no possible warrant in the known relation of Medford with the Indians. The houses were few; as far, indeed, as the historian, Mr. Brooks, had been able to determine, there were hardly a hundred known freemen with their wives and families before 1680. But after the death of Cradock there seems to have been quite a thriving business in the development of property, at least in the sale of lots, and it is by a careful study of these old records that our local historians have determined that the so-called Cradock house was not the Cradock house at all, but the Peter Tufts house.

Have you ever noticed, when taking an auto trip through some older part of New England, that if you note one old house of peculiar construction, you are almost certain to observe another, or three or four like it, before you leave the settlement? It sometimes seems as if one architect or master builder hit upon one especially happy design for one township and perpetuated that in several variants over the whole community. We would not say that our ancestors built lines of double deckers, or little, cleverly proportioned houses cheek by jowl along an entire street. Land was more reasonable. But a certain fashion in architecture did prevail in colonial epochs as at present. So it is hardly sur-

prising if, at the end of the seventeenth century, when a reasonable prosperity and security had settled upon the little village on the Mystic, three eminent citizens should have constructed brick houses, similar in size, material and design, not for fortification, but for peaceful residence. There rose, at least, however tenable this theory, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Peter Tufts house, the Jonathan Wade house, called the Garrison house, behind the savings bank, and the Nathaniel Wade house, formerly on Riverside avenue, long since torn down. All were men of wealth. I have tried to find with coarse curiosity the source of their wealth, but can find no trace. It should properly have been in brick yards, or ship building. But if the list of purchases of land made by Peter Tufts alone between 1664 and 1697, as recorded by Mr. Brooks, be authentic, their money must have been made in real estate deals that would completely overshadow the Lawrence and Brooks development put together. In short, our Peter Tufts, in thirty odd years, bought some eight hundred and thirty-five acres, including cow commons, in twenty-seven different transactions, and let go sixty-one and a half. Only his death, in 1700, made a pause in his grasp on the land development idea.

And who was Peter Tufts? The original Peter was born in England in 1617, and came over to America about 1640. He settled originally in Malden, but wisely visited Medford and apparently at once bought land here. This Peter Tufts had three sons and six daughters. The oldest son was also Peter Tufts, commonly known as Captain Peter Tufts. This younger Tufts is the centre about whom we must cluster any new legends we are to build up about the Peter Tufts house. Born probably in Malden, in 1648, he first appears on the records of the plantation of Medford in 1676, having already, at the age of twenty-eight, been honored as selectman. The title to the great oblong of land, including that of an old dwelling house and barn, had passed

to his father in 1677, but by some special agreement Mr. Tufts was in possession at an earlier date. Perhaps he was a tenant in the old dwelling house while he looked over the land, though he had land of his own in Malden. Apparently his oldest son came with him to the old farm on the land there. It was not long, at all events, before the construction of the new home was begun.

It is easy to let an unhistoric imagination range freely over the situation in the Tufts family about 1670. If Peter was married or about to marry, and old Peter had with him in the old farmhouse a family of two other sons and six daughters, the house may have been a little crowded. Congestion did not trouble families as much then as it does today, apparently, for Captain Peter brought up a family of seven sons and seven daughters in the Cradock house, but this family was well to do and Captain Peter was captain of the military company and for thirteen year's Medfords first representative to the General Court. At all events, father or son built the new brick house, and Captain Peter was probably the first to dwell in it, somewhere between 1677 and 1680. I like to think that perhaps he took there his first bride, Elizabeth, in 1670, and that there was born in 1676 Anna, the first birth recorded on the extant Medford records. At all events, it must have been standing ready for his high-born second wife, Mary Cotton, who came in 1684 to him with the blood of two New Hampshire governors and a poetess in her veins, for she was granddaughter of Ann Dudley, the poetess. Her father had the splendid name of the Reverend Seaborn Cotton, and belonged undoubtedly to that distinguished family of ministers. The first son by this marriage was named Cotton Tufts, a son who died too soon to suffer jest upon his name. Another child who was to mean much to the later history of Medford was Simon Tufts, graduated at Harvard in 1724, the first physician of Medford. It was Dr. Simon Tufts who was the warm personal friend of Isaac Royall and used his powers of persuasion to hold



Sir Isaac to the cause of the colonies, and who, after the latter's voyage to England, became agent of his estate, protecting it against the fury of the patriots and endeavoring to gain permission for Royall to return to his native home. The son of Dr. Tufts, Dr. Simon Tufts the Second, was also one of Medford's trusted physicians.

There was, of course, a third Peter Tufts, oldest son of Captain Peter. A short time before his death Captain Peter Tufts conveyed to this oldest son of his forty-five acres of land on the north side of the way to Blanchard's, i.e., Wellington,

Also the east half of my brick house, as it is divided by the fore door and stairway, the stairway to be in common up chamber and garret, and egress and regress for the east end inhabitants to use the door without doors that leads into the cellar, and one-half of the cellar room and that at the easterly end of it. But my son Peter his heirs and assigns shall not pass through y the north room into the cellar but shall make a way under the stairs into the celler for their own use.

Mr. Hooper, to whom I am indebted for this quotation, goes on to add that, "From the above it will be seen that 'the door without doors that leads into the cellar' was at the west end of the house. The door that leads into the cellar from the outside today is at the east end of the house. The passageway into the cellar through the north room, the use of which was forbidden to 'my son Peter,' was probably by means of a trap door in the floor, a method of reaching the cellar much in use in those days." This same curious division of the house into two parts by will was also practiced by Mr. Ebenezer Cutter, a later owner of the same house, in 1750, when he set off the west end to his widow and the easterly end to his eldest son. Only Mr. Cutter was a little more liberal to his eldest son, specifying that he "shall have the liberty of putting in casks at the other cellar door in the widow's part of the house and taking them out as he may occasion." One's imagination, if not severely tempered by Mr. Mann, might run riot on a house thus divided against itself. I cannot find to whom Peter Tufts left the west end of the house,



but probably to his second, or possibly his third, wife, Prudence by name. In this case the stepson and his family in one half, were cautioned from infringing on the new wife's share, and perhaps a young wife, in the other half. Probably the fourteen children never lived in the house together as they were thirty years apart from oldest to youngest, and the oldest were married and out of the house. This same method of division I know was in another old home — the Manning homestead at Billerica.

To revert a moment from hard facts to my creative imagination, in its proper limits, that old house must have been very charming when new, with its view from its knoll by the road south over the flooded marshes or the winding river, with Wellington and its old house and one or two other houses lying to the east; behind, the ploughed land and the wood lots, and westward the little settlement of Medford. Undoubtedly there was work in the clay pits close by the house, and a subdued hammering of early boat-builders off and on along the river's brim. Doubtless there was a giant woodpile in the back yard, and the ten sons had labor enough at home to keep them from lounging on the street corners. If Peter Tufts wished to go into Boston, he went along the road to Medford square, for the other end of the road to Blanchard's (Wellington) ended with the gate to that estate, which lay at that time in Malden; he then crossed the Cradock bridge and went along Main street. If he intended to ferry across at Charlestown, he went the main route to Charlestown. If, however, he wished to drive a load into town, he must turn through Harvard street, pass through Powderhouse square, go to Cambridge, over past the present stadium, into West Roxbury, and then over the neck into Boston. Probably, under the circumstances, Peter and his wife felt that home-keeping hearts were the best and that the place for children was in the home. There were fish to catch in plenty in the spring, wild duck, turkeys and geese in

spring and fall, boats to be launched by the river and, above all, the chores for a large family. And there must have been the frequent passing of boats up the river, tediously tacking about the curve called "Labor in Vain," or else lighters loaded with brick or timber floating out to the river's mouth. Every family had its lane leading back to the clearing, and at that time there lay just beyond the brick house, on the south side of the road, near that curve on which we now swing into the boulevard toward Boston, a great pine swamp, the stumps of whose trunks still tell the passers of woods perhaps once like the cathedral woods of Intervale, but now perhaps indicating by their submergence, a slow subsidence of this land. This wood and the fells behind must have afforded wood for ship-building and for fire. On Sundays the family attended the first meeting-house, where Captain Peter built a pew for himself in the best location, an indication of his important position in the community as well as of his wealth.

I have not attempted to trace the course of the house through all its varied history. It soon passed out of the hands of the Tufts family, and we have no traditions to build up about its part in the Revolution. It cannot there compete with the Royall house. It finally passed into the hands of General Lawrence, who with his usual public spirit and generosity, saved the old building and put it into repair. He might doubtless have done more had not the fallacy of the Cradock legend been discovered at that time, so that the house lost its claim to a unique position.

Last week, taking as my guide, cicerone and friend, Mr. Mann, I spent a morning in studying the old house. Of course, much of the interior is restoration, and even the bricks of some of the old fireplaces are replaced. But take it all in all, it is still a house of exceptional charm within. The seven great fireplaces are a marvel to our modern eyes. Mr. Mann took his yardstick and measured the great one in the southwest room. The in-

side measurements were five feet, five inches in length, three feet in depth, and four feet, five inches in height. There was a curious little oven in it which Mr. Mann had never seen, and which therefore must be peculiar, and the corners were both rounded in the inside. I think Mary or Elizabeth suggested that to the Captain. In both the rear northern rooms were kitchen fireplaces, with brick ovens and cranes, so that both families could cook independently. I was interested in a neat panelled wood closet built in close to the front chimney, which must have been filled with wood every morning by one of the ten boys. There were also great iron S's on the exterior which pierced the wall and were bolted on the great main beams (shackles, Mr. Mann called them), to keep the brick walls from bulging. The oval windows in the lower rooms were clearly for ornament. No gun could ever have been manœuvred into a position for action. Those in the attic might have been used. The old attic was perhaps the most interesting place of all. There one could see to the best the great original timbers, the flat boards that formed the roof under the shingles, and the flues of the fireplaces verging into a V as they joined beneath the roof. Mr. Mann and Mr. Warren, the present owner, described the hard labor expended in working out the boards, which had been made by a two-man whip-saw. They pointed out to me also the fine old chamfering on the great cross beams and the fine ornamental string courses of brick without. The bricks were said by older tradition to be of a different shape and color from those used elsewhere in Medford, and so the tradition ran that they were imported from England, but the bricks of one of the old Wellington houses which was torn down were similar.

One other splendid example of local tradition we learned while we were there. That was that an ancient tunnel once ran from the northwest corner of the building out to a point some two or three hundred feet to the north, thus permitting escape from Indians in extreme

cases. If one has a really old house, why not make the most of it? And that was one of the finest legends I had yet heard. The present owner, Mr. Warren, had been twice warned by old residents to avoid trouble when he excavated cellars for the new houses he is building on Spring street. Twice was the ground reported to have caved in previously, in both instances along a given line leading toward the house, and Mr. Warren was warned of the danger. Added to this was the fact that part of the cellar in the northwest corner was unexcavated, and doubtless concealed the other terminal of the tunnel. My enthusiasm was stirred. A splendid opportunity to compensate for the lost glory of the Cradock, earliest house, tradition! But Mr. Mann was inexorable. He pricked up his ears at the mention of the cave-ins, but said Mr. Warren would find no tunnel. I added the fact that some ten or twenty years ago two boys had discovered indisputable treasure in an old iron kettle on the very grounds, tradition already says, on the northwest corner of the Cradock-Peter Tufts house; but while Mr. Mann admitted this, he seemed singularly unready to grasp a pick-axe and start in digging. When I went home and studied this account I noted that the bulkhead entrance at present is on the east, while it used to be on the west, and I wondered whether it were not possible that the supposedly unexcavated portion of the cellar concealed this old and doubtless closed entrance. There was no trace of it within or without, but the fact of the western, now concealed, cellar door may have given rise to the legend of the tunnel entrance. Wonderful opportunity for original research.

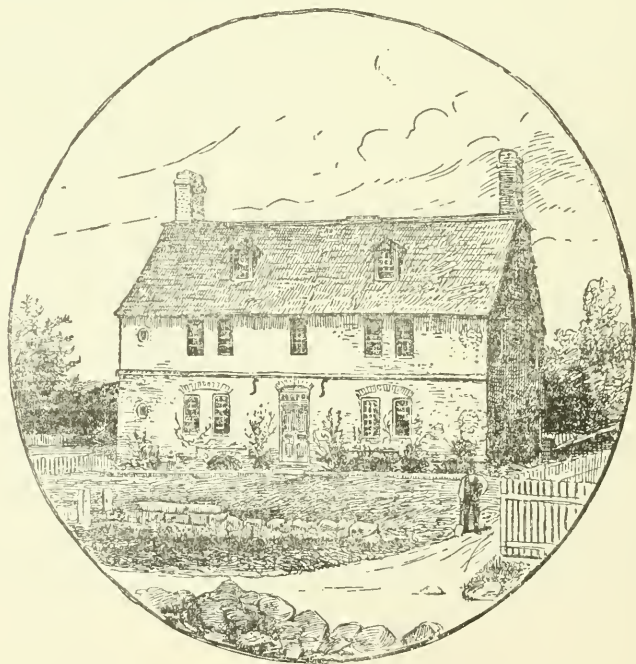
So much for the past of the Peter Tufts house. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities\* called attention to this house in a recent bulletin, and compared it with a similar house which has been restored, and says:

The Peter Tufts house has been much modernized, but could be

\*Bulletin, April, 1915.

put back into its old condition with the help of a competent architect. It certainly deserves such treatment for it is a building of unusual interest, having had apparently a triple casement window on each side of the front door.

I suppose I could not see with the eyes of an architect, but I could see no trace of the triple casement windows, but all of us who love Medford and appreciate its old houses must feel that it would be a certain sacrilege to change the form or construction of the old brick house. It is singular that Mr. Warren, if he contemplates changing the building into a two-family house, has plenty of precedent from the former owners of the house, two of whom, at least, deliberately willed the house as a two-family residence. This was done, however, without remodelling, and with a sacrifice of privacy of family life which the modern generation is unwilling to make. If any society is to take an interest in its future, it must be our own. What shall we do about the preservation of the Peter Tufts house?



FROM *CARPENTRY AND BUILDING*, AUGUST, 1884.

Engraved by its artist.



"THE IDENTITY OF THE CRADOCK HOUSE."

We are quoting this caption from REGISTER, Vol. V, p. 70. The article which followed bore only as signature the words of the Society's seal, *Venerate the Historic*. Its writer referred to Mr. Cushing's article in Vol. I, p. 138, and asked, "Has sufficient weight been given to several features of that [Mr. Brooks'] claim?" and said, "The tradition of the Cradock house is very old. It has the authority of age, and is such authority to be lightly set aside?"

During the past thirty years persistent search has been made for "identity" and very old tradition. We here present a reprint of pages 46 and 47 of Brooks' History of Medford (1855), a book now very rare.

*Governor Cradock's House.*—The old two-story brick house in East Medford, on Ship street, is one of the most precious relics of antiquity in New England. That it was built by Mr. Cradock soon after the arrival of his company of carpenters, fishermen, and farmers, will appear from the following facts.

The land on which it stands was given by the General Court to Mr. Cradock. When the heirs of Mr. Cradock gave a deed of their property, June 2, 1652, they mentioned houses, barns, and many other buildings, but did not so specify these objects as to render them cognizable by us. There is no deed of this house given by any other person. There was no other person that could own it. It was on Mr. Cradock's land, and just where his business made it necessary: the conclusion, therefore, is inevitable that Mr. Cradock built it. There is every reason to believe that it was commenced early in the spring of 1634. Clay was known to abound; and bricks were made in Salem in 1629. Mr. Cradock made such an outlay in money as showed that he intended to carry on a large business for a long time, and doubtless proposed visiting his extensive plantation. The very first



necessity in such an enterprise was a sufficient house. The sooner it was finished, the better; and it was commenced as soon as the land was granted, which was March, 1634. Who, in that day, could afford to build such a house but the rich London merchant? and would he delay doing a work which every day showed to be indispensable? He was the only man then who had the funds to build such a house, and he was the only man who needed it. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, the inference is clear, that the "old fort," so called, was Governor Cradock's house, built in 1634. It is an invaluable historical jewel.

It has been called the "Fort" and the "Garrison House," because its walls were so thick, and because it had close outside shutters and port-holes.

It is certainly well placed for a house of defence. It is on land slightly elevated, where no higher land or rocks could be used by enemies to assail it, and is so near the river as to allow of reinforcements from Boston. Its walls are eighteen inches thick. There were heavy iron bars across the two large arched windows, which are near the ground, in the back of the house; and there are several fire-proof closets within the building. The house stood in an open field for a century and a half and could be approached only by a private road through gates. As the outside door was cased with iron, it is certain that it was intended to be fireproof. There was one pane of glass, set in iron, placed in the back wall of the western chimney, so as to afford a sight of persons coming from the town.

It was probably built for retreat and defence; but some of the reasons for calling it a fort are not conclusive. Outside shutters were in common use in England at the time above mentioned; and so was it common to ornament houses with round or oval openings on each side of the front. These ovals are twenty inches by sixteen. Mr. Cradock's company was large, and he was very rich, and had told them to build whatever houses they needed

for shelter and defence. It is probable, that, as soon as the spring opened, they began to dig the clay, which was abundant in that place; and very soon they had their bricks ready for use. That they should build such a house as now stands where their first settlement took place, is most natural. The bricks are not English bricks either in size, color or workmanship. They are from eight to eight and a half inches long, from four to four and a quarter inches wide, and from two and a quarter to two and three-quarters thick. They have the color of the bricks made afterward in East Medford. They are hastily made, but very well burned. They are not like the English bricks of the Old South Church in Boston. The house has undergone few changes. Mr. Francis Shedd, who bought it about fifty years ago, found the east end so decayed and leaky that he took a part of it down and rebuilt it. There is a tradition, that in early times Indians were discovered lurking around it for several days and nights, and that a skirmish took place between them and the white men; but we have not been able to verify the facts or fix the date. The park impaled by Mr. Cradock probably included this house. It is undoubtedly one of the oldest buildings in the United States; perhaps *the oldest that retains its first form*. It has always been in use, and, by some of its tenants, has not been honored for its age. Its walls are yet strong, and we hope it may be allowed to stand for a century to come. We wish some rich antiquarian would purchase it, restore it to its ancient appendages, and make it a depository for Medford antiquities, for an historical library, and a museum of natural curiosities. It would then be an honor to our town; be made perhaps the scene of a noble tragedy by some gifted writer; and, above all, it would then be a proper monument to the memory of Medford's first friend and founder.

So far as is known this is the *earliest* printed allusion to this old house, and this contains no tradition except "old Fort" or "Garrison House."

Mr. Brooks assumed and asserted it to be "Governor Cradock's House," and presented the above to make *his* "conclusion" "inevitable," but cited no proof whatever. His "inference" was accepted as actual history at a time when very few town histories had been written, and passed unchallenged for forty years. It was repeated, quoted from, enlarged, embellished with fiction, until any dissent was deemed sacrilege.

We recall that during Mr. Hooper's reading of "Old Houses" a worthy man at our side made a dismal groan—"Oh! better have let it been as it was."

Our illustrations show this fine old house from different points of view and at different times, and are worthy of careful observation.

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#### HISTORY OR FABLE, WHICH HAD WE?

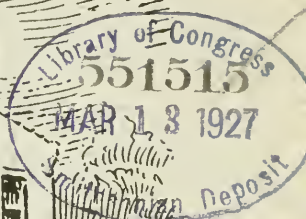
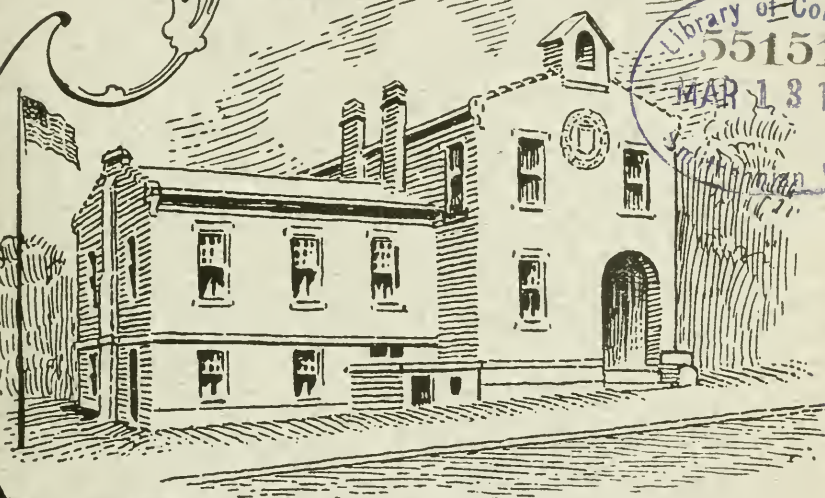
Our Historical Society is completing its thirtieth year and with the coming issue the twenty-ninth volume of its publication. There were some who thought in its early days that it would soon exhaust the stock of history, but there is yet a lot to learn. For instance, when was Medford first settled? Where? And who were they who came into this unknown land and built their first habitation? Was it on "a promontory, sixty rods southeast of the ancient house . . . of James and Isaac Wellington?" This assertion was made (1855): "On its highest point they built *the first home erected in Medford*, in July, 1630." As this spot was then in Charlestown, later Malden and Everett, and not till 1817 or 1875 in Medford, shall we regard it as history or, quoting our former president, as "a whole lot of fable?"

A *real* history of Medford's earliest days would be *really* interesting.

Vol. XXIX.]

[No. 4.]

# HISTORICAL REGISTER



December, 1926

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

FRANK



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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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Advertising Manager, Miss E. R. ORNE.

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### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_







# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXIX.

DECEMBER, 1926.

No. 4.

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## OLD SHIPS AND SHIP-BUILDING DAYS OF MEDFORD.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN MERCHANT VESSEL.\*

THE first improvement in the speed of ships was suggested by the French luggers which came over here at the time of the Revolution. These ideas were applied to the design of privateers in the second war with Great Britain. Plate I shows a model of the Privateer Brig *Avon*,† built in 1813 by Calvin Turner, in twenty-six days. Her lines indicate a very fast vessel, which she proved to be. Her high stern and low bow was a survival of the previous century and was a great advantage in a fighting ship, as guns could be mounted in the stern and used to repel a boarding party to greater advantage. She was very sharp, both forward and aft, and had considerable width, her water line length being but about three and one-half times her greatest breadth. She was built entirely for speed. Her sharp body lines and great dead-rise, which was thirty-six inches at half floor, made her cargo capacity small.

After the war of 1812, there was a great improvement in the design of cargo-carrying vessels. Ship-building had been started in Medford in 1803 and was firmly established here at this period. So the town was destined to take a prominent, if not a leading part in the development of the American merchant ship. The

\*The names of Medford-built ships are italicized.

†Owned by the Medford Historical Society.

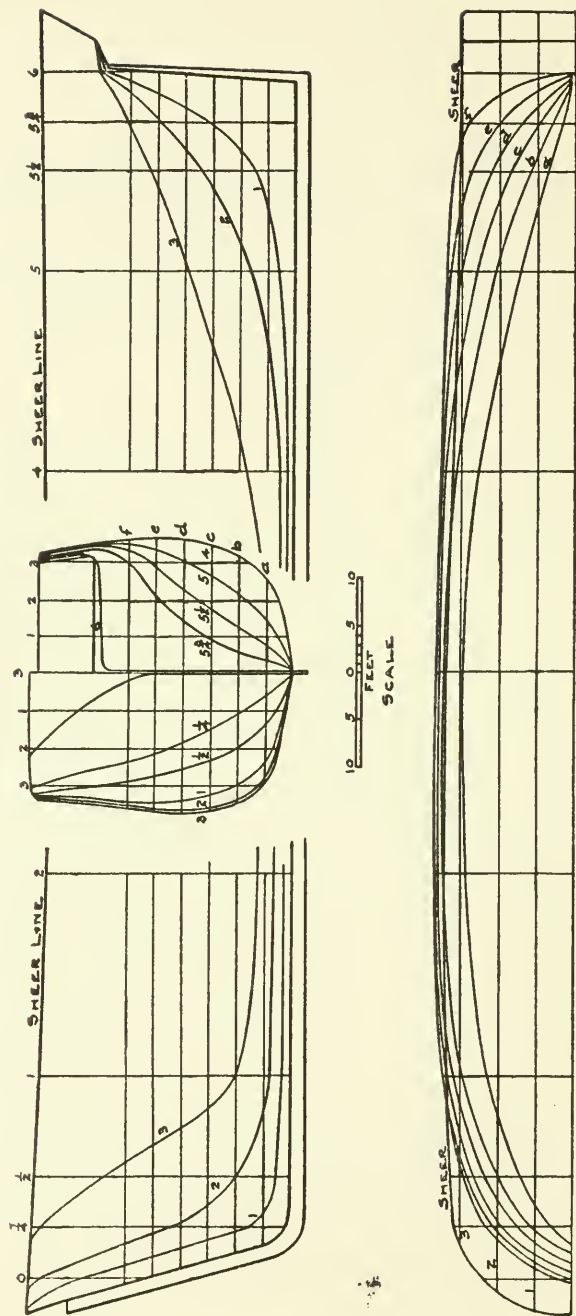


Plate 2

SHIP "AUSTRALIA," 1849

largest ships of the time were built here, and having ten large ship yards within a distance of a mile helped to systematize the industry. In 1845 "one quarter of the shipbuilders in the Commonwealth were employed in this town, and built nearly one-quarter of the ships constructed in the state, one-third of the tonnage and one-half the value of the whole."\*

These vessels had much less dead-rise and fuller lines, both forward and aft. The high stern and low bow was still retained, however, and did not disappear until after about 1830. This may have been because a merchant ship still had to be equipped for fighting pirates.

Plate II shows the lines of a vessel of this type, the ship *Australia*,† (built by Hayden & Cudworth for Silsbee & Stone of Salem) of 557 tons. Although she was not built until 1849, her lines were very similar to vessels built during the two previous decades,‡ except that the bow was higher and the stern lower, and the proportion of length to breadth which had been increased from less than four to one, to four and a half to one. She had eighteen inches of dead-rise at half floor, on the mid-ship section.

Plate III shows the lines of a California clipper ship of 1852, "The Golden Eagle."|| Several vessels of different proportions were built from this model by Hayden & Cudworth, it is said. The proportion of water line length to greatest breadth, which was at the centre, was approximately five and a quarter to one. She shows eighteen inches of dead-rise at half floor on the mid-section. Her water line length was eighty-seven feet and length on deck one hundred and ninety-five feet. The sharpening of her body lines, both forward and aft, is noticeable, and also the easing of the curve of the main transom.¶

\*Rev. A. R. Baker, "Register of Vessels Built in Medford."

†Owned by the Peabody Museum, Salem.

‡See Model of Brig Mexican, 1824, Peabody Museum, Salem.

||Owned by Marine Society, Boston.

¶See Chapter VI.

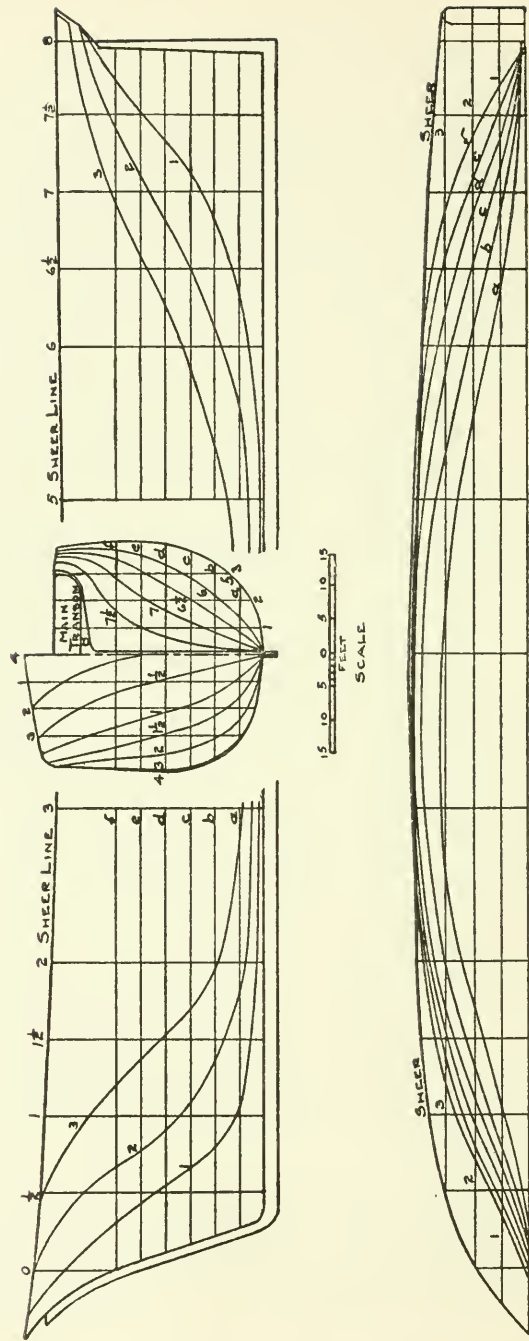


Plate 3

CLIPPER SHIP "GOLDEN EAGLE," 1852



## SOME DAYS OF TROUBLE.

From some unknown source there comes to us the bill against a well known ship-builder who evidently had some difficulty at Chelsea bridge, in the passage of his Medford-built vessel.

Joshua A. Foster Esq.		
1862	Owner of Ship Tangere	Dr.
	To Salem Turnpike & Chelsea Bridge Co.	
Nov. 22.	To Expenses incurred in repairing the Draw in Chelsea Bridge, embraced in the following Bills	
„	„ Norton & Kendrick, Bill	\$42.50
„	„ Bisbee & Endicott „	24.20
„	„ Dows Bill	25.00
„	„ W. D. Waters 4 days services	20.00
„	„ Estimated cost splicing outer String piece	\$50.00
„	„ loss of Tolls $4\frac{1}{2}$ days	109.72
		159.72
		<u>\$271.42</u>

How the claim for damage was settled we cannot say, as the bill is not receipted. Evidently there was an interruption of turnpike travel.

## AND WHO WAS PETER TUFTS?

Such was the query made in a recent address before the Medford Historical Society. It was a pertinent query, and in a measure answered by the speaker, who alluded to the so-called "heretics and vandals" and assailers of vague tradition who have given his name to a substantial old brick dwelling house in our city which for forty years had been otherwise styled.

As shown in a genealogy of 1855, there were *three* of the name (father, son and grandson), other Peters more remotely related, and nearly four hundred of the Tufts surname.

The eldest Peter Tufts was an early settler in Malden and came to Medford, purchasing his land of the son and executor of Richard Russell, who had acquired title of Collins, and he of the Cradock heirs.

It is well to remember that territorially the Medford of its earliest days was but about four square miles entirely surrounded by Charlestown, entirely north of the river, and Peter Tufts' purchase in the eastern corner. And Peter Tufts (father or son, perhaps both) had a dwelling-house erected. Young Peter, who successively was Ensign, Lieutenant and "*Captain Peter*," was twenty-two when he took unto himself a wife, Elizabeth Lynde of Malden, in 1670. As their daughter Anna, born in 1676, is the *first written in Medford records*, there may have been more of the family that we have no record of.

What legends shall we build up of that time, the Medford people, and its dwellings and homes? Well, the Medford people of that day were not the cosmopolitan Americans of today; they were *English* emigrants and their children, distant but loyal subjects of the British king. Peter Tufts' boyhood was during the time of Cromwell and the commonwealth, and during its last eight years was the restoration. And during all these years a Puritan commonwealth and a Puritan church were growing and established this side the sea, its capital, Boston, but five miles away.

But the home town of Peter Tufts was a small and slow-growing one, barely emerging from the status of a twenty-five-hundred-acre farm owned by a single proprietor who never saw any of it. When Peter's father came and bought some land, a few others did, and two also built substantial dwellings.

Over in Malden (as Mystic side had come to be known) and not far away were several dwellings, and one of them remains there today.\* Across the river was the dwelling of the first Governor, Winthrop, and farther west his *farm* house, somewhat enlarged, and later to be noted.† But these were not in Medford, but in Charlestown for nearly a century. But the big brick house awaited and housed the large family of Captain Peter that were to help peo-

\* Old Wellington house.

† Royall House.

ple the Medford that was to be. His neighbors and associates, the Wades, Willows, Francis, Bradshaw, and Whitmores were scattered along the road that followed the old Indian trail across the plain, across the three brooks and over the hill to the fords and fishing places to parting of the ponds. Not until the coming of these neighbors had there been any semblance of a town government, and unlike any other named place in the colony of the Puritans, no church gathered. In fact, the inhabitants of Meadford had in 1684 seemed to think themselves of some importance, and sent Peter Tufts and neighbor Nathaniel Wade to the great and general court to ascertain their status. And they came back with the memorable reply, and the little four-mile hamlet learned that it had "been and is a *peculiar* and have power as other towns as to prudentials."

Thereafter they began to really be somebody, and began to have town meetings. Peter Tufts was then thirty-six years old and was prominent thereafter in Medford affairs. The dark angel of death had visited the big brick house and taken Peter's wife Elizabeth, and four children were needing a mother, and after a year Peter brought home a second wife, Mary, who was to increase the family brood to sixteen.

There were four children, and perhaps a like increasing number in the other dwellings along up the Mystic, and Peter was lieutenant and forty-five years old when Meadford people felt the need of a meeting-house. And Peter Tufts was one of the committee that got it erected, and one of the more important ones who seated the town therein. He lived farthest away, but they found the central location on the "great rock" where the road led off to Woburn. It might be interesting to follow him through the succeeding years, in town meetings there and the town's effort to maintain worship without any existing church organization—not a very successful venture, either, as the town records, which had begun to be kept, show us.

But the eighteenth century had begun, and in 1712 a new movement started — Meadford had a Fast Day and time of prayerful consideration of “church gathering.” Preparing for this, one Brooks provided “neats toong and cheese,” and Captain Peter must have killed the fatted calf for “veall for the fast,” and Mrs. Hall “entertained the ministers.” What the liquid refreshment was does not appear, but the town paid the bill, as the town book shows eleven shillings and ninepence, a very modest outlay. Doubtless Peter Tufts had his part in the general jubilation at the ordination feast of the new minister, Rev. Aaron Porter. We wish he had left some record of his mile-and-half journey up to the meeting-house just after the wild “snow-stown, when more people came than could get into the meeting-house.”

What might not have Peter Tufts told of the times in which he lived, of the days of the witchcraft delusion and terror; of the royal governor Andros and his underling Lidgett over across the river; of Andros' ousting and the news of the accession of the new sovereigns, William and Mary. The tax-payers then were only about thirty, and Peter Tufts was one very notable among them, one of the men that had to do with the making of the fifty-year-old hamlet into a town called Meadford.

The genealogy of Peter Tufts' family is a curious study. What a fatality must have hovered about that old house that six of the first seven children of Peter and Mary Cotton Tufts should, in early infancy, die, and only John (the third) be spared, he whom his townspeople, in 1712, wanted for their minister. Next, in 1700, was Simon, who was Medford's first physician. And Simon had just attained his majority when Captain Peter passed away in 1721. We read that the property his father Peter bequeathed him in Medford “consisted of seventeen acres of land, five of which were at Snake-hole.” And where was Snake-hole? Was it the wonderful tunnel we were told of when we visited the fine old

home of Captain Peter? We don't think so; still, we have a little curiosity as to that locality and how it got the name. We have gathered up the few incidents named with the wish that others more curious may be more successful in their quest of the doings and life of Peter Tufts, who must have been a prominent man in Medford "in colony times under the king."

---

### MIDDLESEX FELLS.

In these days of thickly settled communities one welcomes an occasional glimpse of woodland scenery, however fleeting. Here in Medford the visitor may avail himself of brief tours on excellent tree-lined roads through sylvan scenery unsurpassed. Should he care to prolong his stay, excursions in the Fells, where craggy hills delight, sequestered glades invite, rock-strewn ravines enthrall, and tranquil pools entice, await his pleasure.

This tract of some twenty-two hundred acres of reserved State land forms a wooded paradise at the very gates of thriving modern cities. O'er these historic hills the native Indian trod, and to this day they have retained their primitive allure. Wild life is indeed depleted, yet varieties of game birds and small animals abound.

One may dispel the jaded feeling acquired through city life by idling time away to the harmony of song birds and the whisperings of trees caressed of breezes.

Let the pedestrian stroll through silent, shady glens past the Panther Cave and the Stone Face to the rush-bordered depths of Wright's pond; or wend his way along the reservoir to Spot pond with its attractive zoo. He may view these three waters while they are serene under a cloudless sky or tossing in white-capped rage when lashed by the wind-driven rain. Brooks there are, which take their murmuring course through fern-grown bottom lands or rush in miniature cascades down the rocky



steeps, later to ripple gently toward the waters of the Mystic.

Motorist and pedestrian have access to excellent observatories, one at Bear hill, Stoneham, the other in the very heart of the Medford section of the Fells, a monument to the name of Lawrence. Both are easily reached from convenient roads. The variety of views from the latter tower are exceptional. From its base stretch wooded hills to the borders of suburban Boston. Beyond these districts can be seen the ocean, the Hub itself, the famed Blue hills and the Mystic lakes.

Bridle paths through all this scenic grandeur are innumerable. One might canter on unendingly each day along a different route.

In the winter, ponds where the lily blooms in season offer their icebound surfaces to skaters. Hills where daisies and buttercups nod beneath summer skies afford excellent tobogganing and skiing grounds; and over all this scene, so verdant in the springtime, so colorful under the masterful tints of autumn, the ardent snow-shoer may tread a sporty course when the bleak days of winter arrive.

Thus, in every season, the Medford Fells extend to all opportunity for rest, recreation and appreciation of the great out-doors. Visit these inspiring woodlands and see how beautiful is rugged Nature unmarred by modern enterprise.

EDWARD M. BROOKS.

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#### THE RENOVATION OF PETER TUFTS' HOUSE.

Early in 1870, when a new-comer to Medford, I first saw, and in a way read the pages of Mr. Brooks' "History of Medford," which were reproduced in the last issue of the REGISTER. I was also attracted by the steel engraving. Like other casual readers, I read and accepted it as historic truth. Inquiry about the old house brought the reply, "Oh, the old fort! Medford is famous for its ships, rum and old houses," which threw little light on



the real history of the old house which is really a monument of olden time. We readily concede that, and in reply ask, how old? It *is* a remarkable structure. Who built it? and when? are reasonable queries and certainly worthy of an answer. Seen, while riding along the street during the years, like those Charlestown people who have never ascended the monument, I had never been upon its ground or within it till the time referred to by Mrs. Coolidge in her recent address.

All these views presented are worth careful scrutiny. Considering that this fine old house has been claimed as "oldest in America," a "big book" might be written regarding the *first* and early houses, and therefore the oldest houses of the colonists, and of their form, plan and method of construction.

Peter Tufts "builded better than he knew." He adopted a rectangular form of two stories covered by a gambrel roof, practically a three-floored or storied house, enclosing space enough for his children to grow up in and set up homes for themselves. And he built its walls of enduring material, too,—bricks of Medford clay, hard burned and indestructible. Unlike the few which preceded, the chimneys with their fireplaces were built into each end wall of both stories and the flues brought together in the gables and "topped out" in one stack or shaft. And these fireplaces were of generous size and fitted with cranes, water boilers, brick ovens and other accessories for cooking, as well as being the only heating plant of the time. With such thick, strong brick walls built, it only remained to put in floors, cover the enclosure with a roof, build stairs and partitions, and Peter Tufts had a dwelling outranking any in the Mystic valley. Steel beams had not come into use then, so the floor girders extending from wall to wall were put in, of oak timbers "hewn squarely to line" and the corners finely moulded. Smaller flooring joists were placed between these, and on these were laid the flooring boards of pine of generous width. The builders did not forget

to put in iron shackles (with an S-shaped head band on the outer ends) to anchor each girder to the exterior wall. A straight piece of iron would have served the purpose equally as well, but the S-shape required more smith work and more cost. And a plain brick wall without the moulded base and belt course would have been less expensive. But Peter Tufts was building the finest house in town, and the *ornamental* feature of eight (possibly nine) small elliptic windows was incorporated, two in each story, front and near the ends of the house, and two in each gable. "History repeats itself"—in recent years people have used the same decoration in their new dwellings, but they did not call them "port-holes."

Since our visit to this house we have made effort to learn something of its condition at the time when it was restored or renovated by General Lawrence, its then owner. Interviews have been had with several well-known Medford men who worked upon it and whose evidence is credible. None fixed the *exact* date, but all agreed that "it was about 1890." Mr. Ernest Moore said he was about the house nearly three months while in the employ of General Lawrence, who had as architect Mr. Lyman Sise. Mr. J. H. Archibald, a well known builder of Medford, made the repairs and Mr. Moore had a general oversight of them. Replying to our query as to the internal condition he said, "It was a mess; everything torn out inside and old-finish stuff piled up in the attic." What of the stairs? "All pulled down and new ones built." Like the old? "Yes, in the same place, but a door was put on the landing part way up, where there was none before. We found an iron rod at the floor that was a tie lengthwise the house, that we had to cut out and the General didn't like it." How about the partitions? "They didn't carry any weight and the studding joints were split from oak plank by an axe." What are the new ones? "They couldn't get any oak studding at Foster's and the General insisted on replacing with oak, so we got oak plank and had some

sawed." Regarding the plastering, "all new and the old split laths replaced by the sawed laths in common use." What about the fireplaces? "All repaired as needed, by Northey & Vinal, who did the mason work." What supported the brick work over the fireplaces? "I *suppose* an iron bar, but don't know." What of the front doorway? "Oh, the General had a porch built over it, said, 'fools might stand out of doors in olden times, but we need not now.'" Any *embellishment* about this? "No, but he sent me to the brickyard to select the hardest and oldest-looking bricks I could find to build the two pillars of, and when brought, Vinal said he would not lay up such stuff for the General. But he did."

Mr. Frank Blodgett worked there and was Mr. Archibald's foreman. He remembers that "the girder across the middle of first floor in the southern end of the house was in bad condition and was replaced by a new one, with some difficulty procured, and that some of those in the second floor were decayed at the ends and repaired by splicing in new pieces." By the shrinkage of that new stock this fact is clearly evident today. He also tells the same story as Mr. Moore of the new oak studding.

Mr. John Benson "made the new door frame with its sill of very hard oak," doing his work at Mr. Archibald's shop, and also there made the "window frames for the port-holes," meaning the sashes that enclose the glass and which are set in the brick work of the walls.

Mr. Otto J. C. Neilson who was a Medford boy carrying newspapers down old Ship street for Mr. Peak in 1872 tells of the neglected condition of the old house at that time "doors open and windows broken," and remembers that the "port-holes were then filled up with brick."

Mr. Sise said that he "wanted the General to have the old style iron hinges and latches on the new doors, but they were fitted up with modern hardware."

Mr. Blodgett said that the new interior finish all came from Brown & Co.'s mill at Somerville. The doors are

all of modern style and make, and thicker than are usually found in old colonial houses. All windows were replaced by new sashes of modern thickness and hung with balancing weights. This also necessitated new enclosing frames placed in the old openings and reducing the glass width of each five inches.

Only the attic escaped the general renewal and here is the most interesting feature. The framing of the roof remains as original, about the only thing old in wood work now to be seen in the house, except the girders or large timbers in the ceilings of both stories. We were told that these were *renovated* by being scraped quite smoothly to remove the axe-marks of the hewing.

In 1884, a builders' magazine of New York sent its artist here, got a view of the house and made illustrative drawings of the roof frame and peculiarities of window frames and published the same in its August issue. This was probably because of a communication from Mr. Cleopas Johnson, who had told of re-shingling it thirty-five years before, and in his letter quoting Brooks' history.

Only the stairway is enclosed in the attic, and a lot of drawers and storage spaces fitted under its steep roof add to its convenience. In the eastern end there are no "port-holes" as in the western. Mr. Brooks tells that Mr. Shedd, then owner, had to tear down and rebuild part of that end, which may account for the two regular-shaped windows now there.

Descending to the cellar, we found that it is excavated only half way under the western room, but some access to the western chimney is had for the smoke pipe of the modern heating plant now in use.

The brick walls are so covered by a thick vine-growth as to make a close or careful examination of them very difficult. Apparently at some time long past they may have been treated with some coating or wash, as has been the custom elsewhere.

We were accorded the opportunity of inspecting it by

the courtesy of the present owner, Mr. J. W. Warren, who is erecting several new houses nearby.

This fine old mansion, so well worthy of preservation, was the home of a prominent citizen of the early town two hundred and fifty years ago, one who had much to do with the current matters of his time.

We are presenting the foregoing as a way mark in its history not to be lost sight of.

---

### THE WEST MEDFORD POST OFFICE.

In a new building of brick at 431 High street is now housed the West Medford post office, a station of the Boston Postal District, in charge of Superintendent Frank B. Hamill. The building, erected by private enterprise under government supervision, is leased for a term of ten years, and is most admirably adapted to the needs of the postal service. Twenty-six men and several motor trucks are required to attend the daily routine. The building is of colonial design and its purpose need not be mistaken, as on the front entrance is "West Medford," on the second-story entablature "United States Post Office," and above all the staff from which the stars and stripes daily fly. Its frontage is fifty-two feet, its depth ninety-two feet, and it occupies a lot beside Whitmore brook, hitherto vacant from time immemorial. In 1872 the Congregational parish thought of building there, but its architect deemed the site unsuitable.

One of the clerical force, Warren E. Wescott, has given an excellent account of this post office from its institution in November, 1852 (elaborating that of Mr. Farnum in REGISTER, Vol. XVI, p. 38):—

The office occupied a space about ten feet square in the back part of the store, the entrance being from the Harvard avenue door. The residents mailed their letters through a slot in the front door. The slot, though plugged, can still be seen. Mr. Baldwin held office until May 3, 1859.

Franklin Patch was appointed to succeed Mr. Baldwin and held



office until September 25, 1866. Mr. Patch was a carpenter engaged in business in Boston. He had the office transferred to his house at 44 Allston street. The house is still standing and in good condition.

It was during this period that the postmastership was not a particularly coveted position. An early resident well remembers that for quite a while the mail was taken to the depot on a wheelbarrow in a small mailing case for delivery.

Up to this period there is no record as to how the mails were received, but the following information was obtained from Joseph E. Ober, who is probably the oldest resident in West Medford. Mr. Ober lived in Arlington and conducted a milk business. In driving through West Medford on his morning rounds he met the mail carrier quite often. The mail was transported from Boston in an old-fashioned carriage, the pouch for West Medford being thrown off at the door about six o'clock in the morning.

Probably no superintendent has worked under a greater handicap for lack of space and equipment than Mr. Hamill. The office space was far too small and most of the equipment obsolete. In spite of this handicap, three additional carriers and one clerk have been added to the force since Mr. Hamill took office, because of the steady growth of the district. From the very beginning of his appointment, Mr. Hamill has advocated better postal facilities, and has left no stone unturned to bring about the present results.

## FOUND IN MIDDLESEX CANAL FILES OF 1804.

### A VERBATIM COPY.

Dementions of A. Boat

24½ feet Keel & 6 feet Wide & 2 feet 4 Inches Deep to be built as follows. All of pine except one Streek In the bilge that to Bee Oake & to Row With four oars & to have seets fore and aft & a rudder and to Bee Built after the moddle of a Wale Boat to Bee finished In three Weeks and Sonner if possible

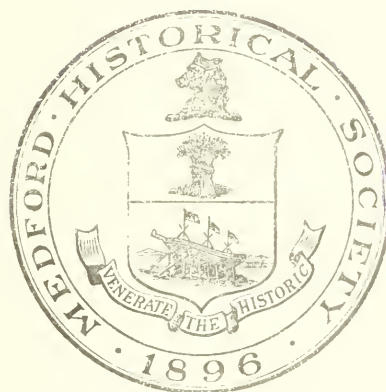
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ANDREW HOWARD



THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL  
REGISTER

VOL. XXX, 1927



PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASS.

MEDFORD

J. C. MILLER, JR., PRINTER

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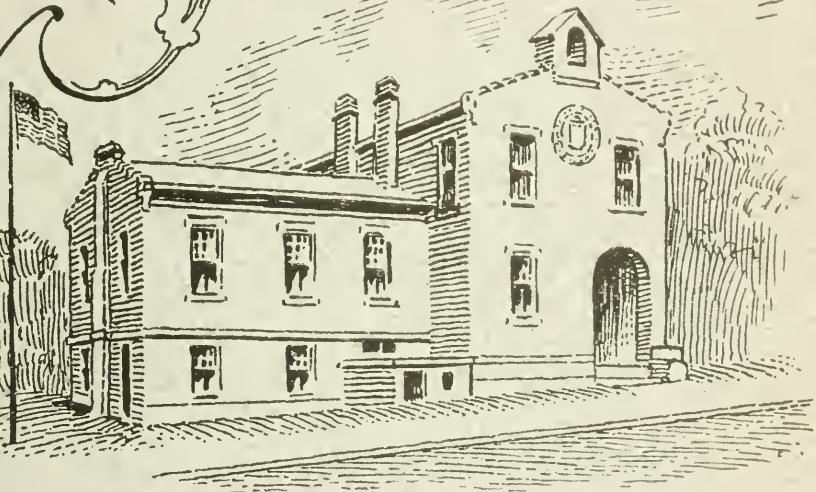
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March, 1927

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_





RESIDENCE OF PETER C. BROOKS, 3d

Erected 1860

Courtesy of "*Medford Mercury*"



RESIDENCE OF SHEPHERD BROOKS

Erected 1880

Courtesy of "*Medford Mercury*"

# The Medford Historical Register.

VOL. XXX.

MARCH, 1927.

No. 1.

## THE BROOKS ESTATES IN MEDFORD FROM 1660 TO 1927.

By RICHARD B. COOLIDGE.

[Read before the Medford Historical Society, March 21, 1927. Acknowledgment is due Mrs. Shepherd Brooks, who generously made available her husband's manuscript referred to in the text, and to Mrs. Coolidge who compiled the material.]

IT is one of the functions of a historical society to record history as it transpires. Here in Medford it is unfortunate that we have so few records of certain memorable periods of our past. In 1775 there was no historical society existing. Had there been, we might now read in the records of that day at what hour of the morning the Minute Men marched up the road toward Lexington, how far they advanced, and at what point they joined in the attack upon the British Regulars. Again we are unable to determine with certainty the builder of the famous Cradock house, or to demonstrate that Washington came to the Royall house. In later years there are like omissions. To prevent similar gaps in the future, a historical society may perform a valuable function in recording and collating events as they transpire, and before they merge with dim outline into those of later years.

In years to come it is likely that our present decade will be fixed as that in which Medford passed through a stage of transition from the old order to the new. In that process the recent enlarging and rebuilding of Medford square substitutes in appearance the metropolitan suburb for the town. At the same time the development of outlying areas into residential districts has brought on the breaking up of family estates which through years of long holding have distinguished Medford. Chief among such lands are the tracts that have

been held in the Lawrence and the Brooks families, both of which have in one case to a great extent and in the other to a less extent already passed into other hands, subdivided among many separate householders.

It is of the land holdings of the Brooks family and in a measure of that family that these pages will attempt to make some record from the earliest days to our own times. It is practicable, however, within the limits of a paper to deal in hardly more than skeleton outline, omitting much that might well be written in full. I do not represent that I am setting forth what is not already known and recorded. In fact, this paper is based in large part upon the work of Shepherd Brooks, now preserved in written form under the title "History and Genealogy of the Brooks Family of Medford, Massachusetts, compiled chiefly from the researches of P. C. Brooks, senior, his son, Gorham, and his nephew, William G. Brooks, also from Charles Brooks's History of Medford, by Shepherd Brooks, Boston, 1885." That book forms an invaluable record.

The house of Brooks in Medford reaches back, if not to the earliest years of the settlement, to the later decades of the sixteen hundreds. In all that time the Brooks family has been one of outstanding prominence and has imprinted itself upon the annals of the town and the city. In fact, so associated with the western part of Medford, in particular, has been the name of Brooks, that within our own time, the proposal to divide Medford at Winthrop square and create the town of Brooks out of the territory lying to the west all but received legal sanction. By the closest of margins, however, the proposal was not adopted and the territory that was old Medford remains, so far as that proceeding is concerned, the Medford of today.

In 1660 Thomas Brooks became the first of this family to acquire land holdings in Medford. Medford had then progressed from a mere settlement to a scattered hamlet. Near the site of the present square stood



the house of Cradock's agents and the great barn which sheltered his cattle and farm implements. On the site of and a part of the present Royall house stood Governor Winthrop's farmhouse. Scattered elsewhere along the roads, if they may be so called, were other small houses. There was, it is said, a rough wagon road leading from the future square along the old Indian trail to the weirs, or fishing ways, where the ponds narrow into the Mystic. These had been used from Indian times, as appears from the fact that the use of the weirs was reserved to the Indians in the deed of the Squa Sachem to Winthrop in 1639. Near the weirs at that early day stood a corn mill, an undivided fourth part of which passed to the first Brooks who became the owner of land in the present territory of Medford.

Such was the surrounding country which to the extent of four hundred acres Thomas Brooks acquired by deed recorded at Cambridge on the 16th day of May, 1660, from Edward Collins. The land in question lay on both sides of the road to Woburn, now called Grove street but then, or shortly thereafter, known as the road through the woods. Thomas Brooks, it should be said, never settled in Medford. He came over from England about 1630 in the same company with Saltonstall and others. Some of those early adventurers settled here, but Thomas Brooks, it appears from the records, had a lot assigned to him on the main road in Watertown. In 1636 he moved to Concord, where he became a freeman, and lived until his death on May 21, 1667. He was seven years Representative from Concord, and received various local appointments of trust and honor. Although he had a large estate in Concord, he evidently wished to make further provision for his children. Accordingly, with his son-in-law, Timothy Wheeler, he invested four hundred and four pounds sterling in these acres in Medford — two-thirds for himself and one-third for Wheeler. Collins was already a large holder of land at Mystic. He lived for many years on Governor Cradock's plantation



and purchased it from the heirs of the governor in 1652. It may have been that fact which led him to part with his holdings to the west. The deed from Collins gives in quaint and formal language the terms of the purchase. It reads in part as follows :

Edward Collins merch't and Martha his wife . . . do fully clearly & absolutely grant bargain and sell alien enfeoffe and confirm under them ye said Thomas Brooks & Timothy Wheeler one Me ssuage or Tenement situate Lying and being within ye bounds of ye said plantation of Meadford (and lands adjacent) & ye now mentioned place of Golden Moor containing by estimation, four hundred acres of land more or less according to a plat taken and bounds marked by Capt. Nicholas Shapley; excepting & only reserving unto ye said Edward Collins, his heirs or assigns ye wood and timber of sixteene acres of land anent ye Great Pond & not lying above one mile from ye aforementioned Dwelling house with free egress and regress for fetching ye same. Also two acres of Land adjoining to Thomas Eames clay land. Also to Golden Moor ye priviledge & right he hath therein by Lease signed by ye said Edwd Collins. Also six acres of meadow land Lying in ye Easterly part of ye Meadow yt Lyeth on ye West side of Meadford river, lately appertaining to Mr. Thomas Broughton, with one-fourth part of all ye appurtenances thereto appertaining, according to ye Deed of Conveyance passed upon record from ye said Broughton to ye said Collins. . . . And also ye said Edwd Collins doth covenant for himself & heirs to clear and acquit ye said Thomas Brooks & Timothy Wheeler, their heirs and assigns from all damage and costs by ye waters of ye Mill pond flowing on ye meadows appertaining to My. Symmes' Farm so farre as fifteen shillings per anno or three acres of Meadow will tend toward ye clearing of ye said Quarterpart . . . Cambridge ye 16th of May 1660.

This witnesseth yt Edward Collins . . . do covenant, promise and grant to & with Thomas Brooks and Timothy Wheeler . . . that ye said Thomas Brooks and Timothy Wheeler . . . shall and may at all times and from time to time forever hereafter, peaceably and quietly have free egress and regress to ye landing place at ye Rock by Meadford River near to John Marable's house for ye Laying of such wood and timber as they shall see cause to bring down to ye said place for ye conveying down the River, provided they lay it in such order & manner as may not block up ye said place from ye use of ye said Collins, his Heirs . . .

From this deed it appears that there was heavy timber

growing down close to the Mystic lakes, called the Great pond. The rock by the river, undoubtedly the rock near the end of Hastings lane, had already been in use. There is a touch of thrifty New England in the condition that the new purchaser may use this landing place, provided he lays his wood and timber in such manner as will not block up the place for Mr. Collins. There had, it seems, already been trouble from the water of the mill pond overflowing the meadows of Mr. Symmes' farm, which lay, it is believed, at the northern end of the pond near the Winchester of today.

The first Brooks estate, then, was situated on the east side of Mystic pond and east and north of the Mystic river. The mill referred to stood a few rods below the later bridge at the weirs. About one hundred acres lay on the south side of the road to the present Arlington, now High street, beginning with the weir bridge and running easterly along High street almost to the present line of the Boston & Maine railroad. From that point the boundary ran southerly to the Mystic river, and then westerly and northerly up the river to the bridge. This part of the property, it may be noted, in anticipation, remained in the Brooks family until about 1779, when it was sold. In 1843, however, it came back again into the ownership of a later generation, when Peter C. Brooks bought it from Nathan Tufts. In 1853, his son, Gorham, disposed of this tract to land speculators, so called, and the holdings of the Brooks family thereafter remained on the north side of High street.

The remaining three hundred acres acquired by Thomas Brooks lay to the north and on both sides of Grove street of today. At the date of the original purchase of the whole tract, in 1660, there was on the land a messuage, or tenement so called, leased to Golden Moor. This house, the first of the Brooks houses, stood on the south side of High street, directly opposite the end of Grove street. The four hundred acres comprised almost a feudal estate, including as it did wood-

land, meadow land, a dwelling house, one-fourth right in the grist mill and access to the clay pits. It does not appear when the land was cleared of timber, but that process undoubtedly began with the first Brooks, for he reserved the right to make use of the landing place at the rock. The clay pits were doubtless made use of by a later generation at least, for Caleb Brooks of Revolutionary fame, a brick-maker by trade, could hardly have neglected to utilize the clay beds that lay at hand.

The first of the Brooks family to take up actual residence in Medford was Caleb, son of Thomas. In 1679 he made his abode in the house referred to on the south side of the present High street, opposite the delta. That nineteen years elapsed between the sale to Thomas and the settlement by Caleb is probably accounted for by the fact that the land had meanwhile been leased to Moore. On the death of his father in 1667, Caleb's portion of the estate appears to have comprised all the land on the east side of Grove street, and the northern part of that on the west side between Grove street and the upper Mystic pond, as well as the eastern part of the property lying south of High street, including the house which he occupied.

Caleb Brooks died in Medford in 1696. His real estate was divided between his two sons. Ebenezer, the eldest, and the grandfather of Governor John Brooks, received, as nearly as can be determined, that part lying south of High street including his father's house, part of the land on the east side of Grove street, from Symmes corner as far south as Slow pond, now Brooks pond, and the land west of this between Grove street and the upper Mystic pond. On the death of Ebenezer in 1743, his four sons inherited his real estate. They and their descendants held the property until about the time of the Revolution, when they sold all their Medford possessions and moved away. The house occupied by Ebenezer later fell to Samuel and Caleb, respectively, grandson and great-grandson of Caleb, the original

settler. According to the Brooks records this house on the south side of High street stood until 1812.

The second son of Caleb was Samuel. His portion of the estate included the land on the southeast corner of High and Grove streets, as far north as Slow pond, from which it extended in a narrow strip in the rear of Ebenezer's land at Symmes corner. In passing it may be noted that the inheritance of these two sons of Caleb as set forth in the inventory of their father's estate gives an insight into the living conditions of the early freeholder. It is too long except for reference.\* This Samuel, born in 1672, was another prominent townsman until his death in 1753. His gravestone, with that of his wife, Hannah, are in the old Medford cemetery. His house, the second of the Brooks houses, stood on the east side of Grove street, nearly opposite the mansion built later on the west side by his great-grandson, Peter Chardon Brooks, remembered by the present generation as the Francis Brooks place. The house of Samuel stood until 1762, when it was burned. His will shows us again the property of a well-to-do farmer. He had two slaves, Bristow and Boston, one left to his wife and the other to his son Samuel. He seems to have been wealthy chiefly in land, for his will mentions but one horse, which with the calash and the horse-cart, he left to his wife, and the cattle and swine which he divided among his heirs. His son, the second Samuel, took among other things a suit of wearing apparel, boot-lashes and silver buckles, and a new house built in 1727.

This house, the third of the early Brooks houses, and occupied by the second by the name of Samuel, stood on the east side of Grove street about one hundred and thirty yards north of the house of the elder Samuel nearer the corner. It was built in all probability in 1727

\*The estate of Caleb Brooks was inventoried at £630 s.14, of which "the housing and lands" were £500 and the personal property £130 s.14. It is evident from the detailed items that the house consisted of a "parlour," a "parlour chamber," "hall, hall chamber, kitchen and garret. There was also a barn.

or about the time of his marriage. Between this house and the road, about 1760, Samuel Brooks or his son Thomas, with the help of the negro slave, Pomp, built the brick wall which is still standing. The bricks were made by themselves in their brickyard situated near the Mystic river, a short distance below the present railroad bridge. About fifteen feet from his house Samuel planted the venerable black walnut tree known all these years as a landmark. In his time, too, the land inherited from his father was increased by the purchase of adjoining land, including Rock pasture, which has become Oak Grove cemetery.

This Samuel was treasurer of the town of Medford for many years. His will is a long and minute document. In it, dated September 6, 1762, and recorded in Vol. 29, Middlesex Probate Office, he directed his executors

to provide for his wife during her life 20 bushels of good Indian corn, 5 of rye, 3 of malt, 6 of winter apples, 3 barrels of cider, and turnips and other sauce sufficient for her; and to find her a horse to ride to meeting and elsewhere as she shall have occasion; also 8 cord of good wood at ye house fit for the fire, one hundred pound of good beef, also a third part of the pew I have in the meeting house and as I have in this instrument given her one half of my plate I do hereby give her the use and improvement of the other half during her natural life.

He also gave to his wife his chaise, two cows, two pigs and his negro woman Rose, and as Rose was then sick, if she should die, his wife was to have the negro girl Dinah. Rose, however, recovered, and after the death of the widow of Samuel both she and Dinah belonged to their son, Thomas Brooks. He gave his negro lad called Pompey and also his silver-hilted sword to his son Thomas, and to his son Edward the negro boy called Chester. The real estate was divided between his sons, Thomas and Edward.

Genealogy, except to the expert, is a confusing pursuit. Among the successive generations of Calebs, Samuels and Thomases, the amateur finds it difficult to



present a statement that is both concise and accurate. It is interesting to observe in tracing this family how often sisters figured in the marriages. The original Thomas married two sisters successively, and his sons married sisters of the Boylston family. We may also digress into Winchester, then Charlestown, where, in a house at Symmes corner, later dwelt Caleb, grandson of the original of that name. Here, at the extreme of the grant to the first Thomas Brooks, was born in 1752, John Brooks, later Governor of the Commonwealth. His history has been written so many times that it is out of place to enter into it in detail. We note, however, that he attended the district school with his playmate, Benjamin Thompson, afterwards Count Rumford, and later became apprentice in Medford to Dr. Simon Tufts. He had settled down in Reading to practice medicine when the war intervened, and Captain John Brooks marched to Lexington, where he perhaps fought shoulder to shoulder with his relatives, Caleb and Edward and Thomas from Medford. He found the British already on the retreat before he could reach Concord, but placing his Reading men near the road between Concord and Lexington, he gave the British troops a volley as they passed. He then followed them, with his men harassing the enemy's rear all the way to Charlestown neck. Soon after this he was commissioned major, while his cousin Caleb of Medford became a captain. It adds a touch of human interest to find that his first child was born June 16th, while the young doctor was off military duty, at home with his wife. That very night, however, he accompanied Colonel Prescott as a volunteer at Bunker hill and was engaged in constructing intrenchments. Perhaps by the grace of God he was despatched the next morning to Cambridge for reinforcements, and there being no horse to spare, was obliged to journey on foot. He was detained in Cambridge all day and returned to Bunker hill only in time to witness the retreat of the American forces. It may have been due to this fact



that the young father lived to see his daughter Lucy again.

At the time of the Revolution Caleb Brooks was living in the house of the first Caleb, opposite the delta. The house built by the first Samuel, at the corner of Grove and High streets, had burned down. Thomas Brooks was living in the house of the second Samuel, behind the slave wall. Another son of this second Samuel was Edward Brooks, famous in local history. This Edward was graduated at Harvard in 1757 and served two years as college librarian. In 1764 he was ordained as minister in North Yarmouth, Maine. His connection with that church, however, brought him toil and trouble. His theology was of a more modern cast than that of his congregation, and he soon retreated to Medford, where he occasionally preached for the Rev. Ebenezer Turell. He also bought land in Medford of John Francis, Jr., on the west side of Grove street, and there occupied what may be called the fourth of the Brooks homesteads. This house stood just north of the later mansion built by his son, Peter C. Brooks, which in turn was torn down in 1915 to make way for the new development. The life of the Reverend Edward Brooks was characteristic of the period. The words of his son are well known, "He was a high son of liberty and started off on horseback with his full-bottomed wig and his gun on his shoulder."

He is said to have been active in the capture of a convoy of provisions at Menotomy about a mile from his own house, the convoy having been sent for the relief of the British troops farther up the Concord road. After the retreat of the Regulars through Menotomy, Edward Brooks saved the life of Lieutenant Gould of the King's Own. This officer, who had been wounded at Concord, was left at Menotomy during the retreat of the Red Coats. From Menotomy he was conveyed by the militant divine on horseback to the Brooks homestead, where he remained until his wound healed, and was exchanged

for an American officer. In the inventory of the estate of Edward Brooks, made in 1781, his real estate, which was the same inherited farm of his father's, with the addition of the house and a few acres of land on the west side of Grove street, was valued at £1036 s.13 d.4 and his personal estate at £421 s.13 d.2.

We have, then, in the one family, Capt. John Brooks, Lieut. Caleb, Thomas and the Reverend Edward Brooks all leaving hot-foot for Lexington. The diary of a British officer, MacKenzie, recently published in full, gives us from the British point of view, what must have been the course of many a mounted volunteer like the Reverend Edward. MacKenzie writes that many farmers rode up and tied their horses at a distance from the road, crept near enough to get in a few shots, and when the column had passed, hurried back to their horses, rode on again until they were a little in advance of the British column, dismounted, tied and fired again, and so repeated the attack until they were out of ammunition.

Peter Chardon Brooks, his son, related that he saw the sun flashing on the bayonets of the British soldiers, as he looked from the garret of his father's house through the thin-leaved trees in the west, and heard the rattle of the musketry.

Another tradition is that Madam Abigail Brooks served chocolate to the Minute Men on their return back from Lexington, as tired and hungry they came down the road. The road was doubtless full of stragglers and volunteers of every description who had gone to get in their shot. It is probable that the Minute Men, who were enlisted for five days, did not return to Medford that evening, but followed the retreating British straight through to Charlestown. Individual skirmishers doubtless came back down the road to Medford, especially those who were already out of ammunition and could fight no more. To these Madam Brooks may have served her chocolate, though there is no source for this belief but tradition. There was a copper kettle, long pre-

served in the family, said to be the identical kettle then used by Madam Brooks. Mr. Henry Brooks later pointed out the site of the identical elm tree under which the chocolate was said to have been served. This tree stood in the driveway on the east side of the Peter C. Brooks house, at that time called the Francis Brooks house. In recent years doubt has been cast on the authenticity of this tradition. In 1775 chocolate was being manufactured in Boston. In fact it is probable that the only chocolate then manufactured in the colonies was made in the corner of a saw mill on the banks of the Neponset river on the site of the present mills of Walter Baker & Co. The maker was a young Irishman, Richard Harman. At his death, a few years later, a Doctor Baker who had interested himself in the young man's enterprise took over the operation of the infant industry, installing his son, Walter Baker, to learn the art of making chocolate. From that beginning sprang the present firm which bears his name. In the latter part of the eighteenth century chocolate as a beverage had become an expensive luxury. It was unpalatable without sugar, and sugar was scarce, though honey was sometimes used in its place for sweetening purposes. Assuming then that sugar was available, Abigail Brooks would have provided an expensive refreshment had she served hot chocolate to the returning army of stragglers on the afternoon of the nineteenth. The day was in any event worthy of the deed.

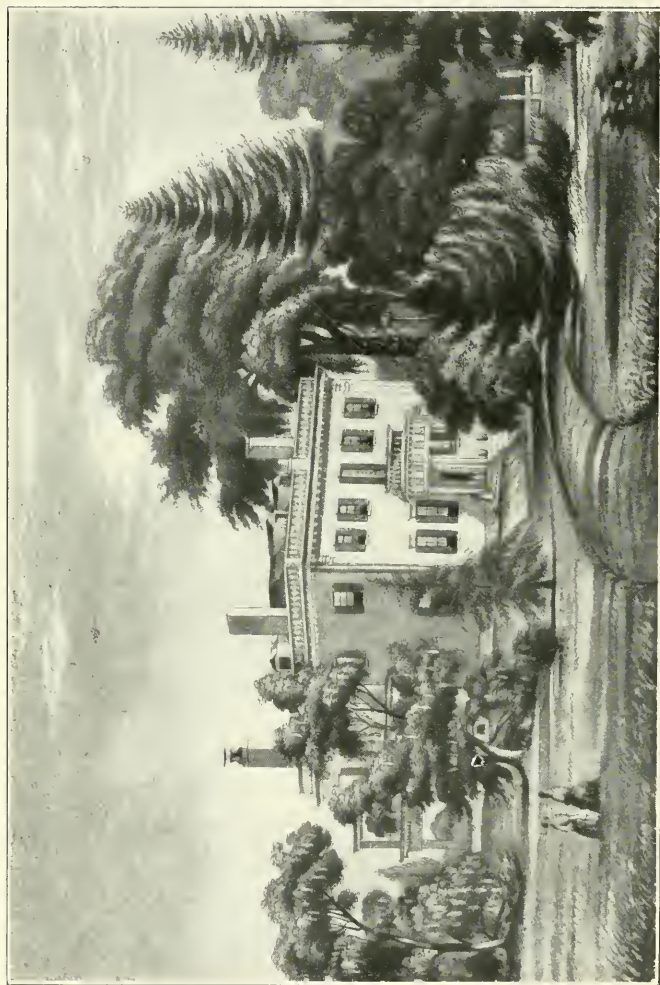
As to the cost of chocolate itself some years before war prices set in, one may read in *The Boston Evening Post*, Number 1255, of Monday, September 17, 1759, the following advertisement: —

#### TO BE SOLD

By John Brewster near Cross Street  
Choice Chocolate at 11 s per Pound,  
10 s 6 d per Dozen, and his best old Stamp 12 s cheaper by the Dozen.

As is well known, Rev. Edward Brooks died a sacrifice

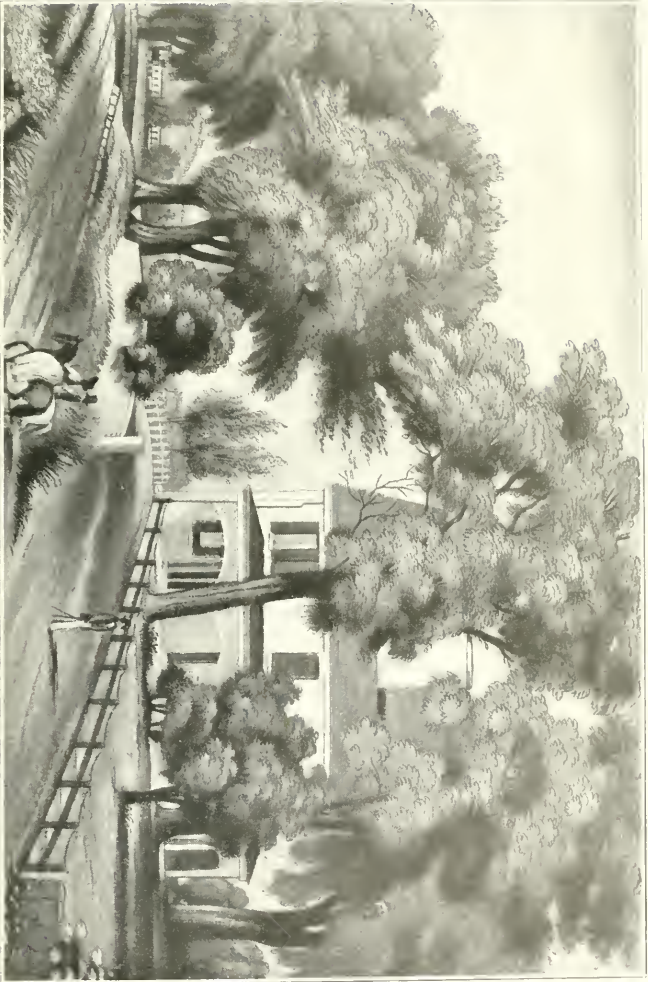




HOUSE OF PETER CHARDON BROOKS

Erected 1802-5





HOUSE OF THOMAS BROOKS  
Built by Samuel Brooks, 1727



to his patriotism. While serving as chaplain on the American frigate *Hancock*, of thirty-two guns, he was taken prisoner into Halifax with the ship and there contracted smallpox. He was released after his recovery, but his constitution was so weakened that he lived only until 1781. It is a coincidence that Isaac Royall, the leading Tory of Medford, should also have turned to Halifax, crossed the Atlantic and there perished from smallpox.

The wills of Edward and of his father Samuel give interesting information about the estate in those years. Next the "mansion" on the eastern side of Grove street was a small orchard with a narrow farm lot behind it. North of this was the "hither" pasture and then the sheep pasture leading in toward the middle pasture and "Slow pond." Behind this in turn was "Rock pasture." About where the house of Mrs. Shepherd Brooks stands today was the upper pasture, and behind that the woodlot, extending practically to Symmes corner. The land on Grove street above Brooks pond was divided into six narrow holdings, running in from the road between the pond and Symmes corner. These each belonged to different members of the family and were probably unsettled and unused. At the death of Rev. Edward Brooks the land was appraised from seventy pounds an acre for that south of his house near the corner to about thirty-eight pounds an acre for pasture land and nine or ten for the woodlot.

At the death of her husband, Abigail Brooks, with the same fine spirit with which she had served the tired soldiers, brought up her four fatherless children. Of these, Joanna, the youngest, was the only one born in Medford, the other three, including Peter Chardon Brooks, having been born in North Yarmouth, Maine. Mrs. Abigail Brooks was herself a descendant of Rev. John Cotton, the old Puritan divine, and proud of the relationship, too, for she christened her first son Cotton Brown Brooks. Apparently something in the name or

the blood ran true to form, for the grandchildren of Cotton Brown Brooks included Phillips Brooks, Bishop of Massachusetts, and his three brothers, all likewise Episcopal clergymen. It was heroic and consecrated inheritance.

The second son of the Rev. Edward Brooks was the well-known Peter Chardon Brooks. The era in which Mr. Brooks lived corresponded more or less exactly with growth of New England in mercantile and manufacturing interests. The same year that little Peter was watching the shining bayonets from the garret window of his home, the home of his future wife, Ann Gorham, in Charlestown, was burned to the ground during the battle of Bunker hill. His life may be called the romance of commerce. He writes in his biography that he may be said to have begun life without a dollar. He died possessing the largest fortune that had ever been left by any individual at that time in Boston. With that he always said that he never tried or expected to get more than six per cent on an investment. He abstained as a rule from speculative investments and he never borrowed. What he could not compass by present means was to him interdicted. One feels that the stern Puritan spirit of father and ancestors spoke in this man also. One wonders how, with such conservative principles, he accumulated his fortune. "When I came to Boston in 1782," he writes, "the country was wretchedly poor. It was the last year of the war; peace was declared in State street in January, 1783, about a month after I came. My father had died the year before, my mother was left with her four children with nothing but the farm of little more than one hundred acres, and on this some debts were due and so remained until I was able to pay them. We had to struggle through as well as we could. No woman could have done better, if so well, as my good mother. She was a rare manager. She insisted on our grappling on without selling an acre. She had the pride that was a virtue. Happily she lived to reap the good effects of

her care and solicitude. Long before her decease her children were abundantly able and willing, nay, delighted, to do all in their power to make her happy and to reward her in some degree for her goodness. . . . I was married at the age of twenty-five, on November 26, 1792. Soon after this came the French Revolution and a war between England and France. Commerce increased prodigiously and premiums also [he was in the insurance business at a time when all underwriting was done by individuals at private offices, of which there were but three in Boston], owing to the captures and restraints of the powers of war, so that from June, 1793, to the peace of Amiens, I was more busily employed and perhaps more profitably than any young man of my acquaintance. . . . The funding system and the First National Bank were great objects of speculation in 1791, and about that period Mr. Brown [a trusted adviser] took no part in them himself, but urged me to, and I did to great advantage, for though I had little property then, he kindly offered to stand in as my surety to any amount. Now it was, what with my office and the funds, that I made money hand over hand. In June, 1803, I quitted the business of a private insurance office. . . . In 1806 I became the president of the New England Insurance Company and so remained about ten years, since which I have been my own man. . . . For this whole period of ten years, I believe, I was in the State Senate and House and Council chambers, which with my office and private concerns gave me full occupation." Such is the simple and modest account of the life of Peter Chardon Brooks and the amassing of his fortune.

More interesting to Medford is his connection with his local estate. Though he resided most of the year in Boston, he was very proud of his mansion house in Medford, the grey mansion which stood on the west side of Grove street until it was razed twelve years ago.

In the course of his lifetime he bought out the interests of the other heirs in his father's real estate and be-

came the sole owner. In 1806 he built for himself a large house, the fifth in the succession of the family homesteads, a few yards south of his father's, which was then taken down. Under his ownership the extent of the Brooks property was greatly increased. It included a lot lying north of his house, and all the land south of his house on the north side of High street between Grove street and the Mystic river, also a large tract of land lying east of the railroad called the "Clewly" land, which he bought from the heirs of John Clewly of Halifax. He also bought of Nathan Tufts the "Tufts farm" so called, lying south of High street, including all the land between that street and Mystic river and Harvard avenue, and somewhat more lying south of the latter. This property was intersected by the Middlesex canal, the land of which forms Boston avenue.

Mr. Brooks always took great pride in his estate at Medford. It was one of the handsomest near Boston. To those who remember the old estate it would seem the typical estate of the gentleman of the period. The exterior of the house was not unduly pretentious. Awnings on the great porch in the rear made it seem more festive in the summertime. In front were hedges of evergreen, with the great elm tree which Mr. Henry Brooks pointed out as one of Revolutionary fame. Behind the house, in the privacy of the hedges, the garden was delightful. A little pond of perhaps a hundred feet, set in a border of stone and abounding in goldfish, made a vista immediately behind the house with a great horsechestnut tree at the end, reflecting in the spring its candelabra of white blossoms in the water beneath. One of the great features of the garden was a silver bell tree, imported from across the sea. The white blossoms were overpoweringly sweet and hung in long festoons all over the great tree, which itself in places stretched its heavy limbs along the very grass. The blossoms were so full of bees that the tree was itself as full of their drowsy humming as of the fragrance of its blossoms. In the



rear was a high brick wall, with an old-fashioned garden bed at its foot, full of hollyhocks and perennials. On the other side of this wall was an aisle of pines over a hundred feet long, under which was the largest bed of lilies of the valley. There was also an experimental garden, where Mr. Henry Brooks in later years grew pink and white lotus blossoms. Such was its beauty that it seemed like an act of vandalism that it should have fallen prey to new development. Beyond the enclosed garden, at scarcely a stone's throw, ran the Middlesex canal. One may fancy that the retired Boston merchant often emerged from this garden to watch the boats pass up and down the placid canal.

With the death of Peter C. Brooks in 1849, at the end of his long, serene life, his son Edward inherited all the Medford estate. It was Edward who bought the strip of land that had belonged to the Middlesex canal, and who sold Rock pasture to the town of Medford for a cemetery. Before the death of Peter C. Brooks his second son, Gorham, had bought from his father the whole of so-called Isaac Brooks farm, built originally by his great-grandfather Samuel and lying beside the slave wall. Here he died in 1855. Gorham Brooks also made great purchases of land, so that he owned all the land on the westerly side of Grove street between the estate of his brother Edward up to and including the land on which the Middlesex canal crossed the Aberjona creek by an aqueduct. A bronze tablet now marks the place. When the aqueduct was removed the granite was used in building the farmhouse of the present estate on the west side of Grove street.

With all this extensive property, Gorham Brooks claved to the simple house of his great-grandfather as a summer home. Like his father, Gorham Brooks took an intense interest in agriculture and in beautifying his own estate.

Others of the thirteen children of Peter Chardon Brooks who may interest especially a Medford audience were Abigail Brown Brooks, who married Charles Fran-

cis Adams, minister to England in the Civil war, and Charlotte Gray Brooks, later the wife of Edward Everett, orator, governor of Massachusetts, and president of Harvard. A sister of Peter Chardon was Joanna Cotton Brooks, who married Nathaniel Hall of Medford and lived in the home later known as the Samuel C. Lawrence farmhouse. The grandson of this Joanna was Francis Parkman, the historian, and it was doubtless from this house that he tramped through the region of the present Middlesex Fells.

It was left to the grandchildren of Peter C. Brooks, the sons of Gorham,—Peter C. Brooks, third of the name, and Shepherd Brooks to present the aspect of the Brooks property as it is known in Medford in later years.

In 1860, five years after the death of his father, Peter C. Brooks, 3d, built the grey stone house which still stands magnificently at the crest of the hill above Brooks pond, facing on the south the long sweep toward Boston, and on the west the shimmering waters of the Mystic ponds. In 1880 Shepherd Brooks, on the knoll farther to the east, built the brick house with its own splendid outlook. These may be called the sixth and seventh of the Brooks homesteads. It was Shepherd Brooks who transformed the so-called "Slow pond," which became only a marsh in the dry seasons, into the charming pond that it is today. His workmen cleaned the site, removing the peat of many generations which clogged the living springs, and then built a retaining wall or dike at the western end.

Peter C. Brooks, 3d, and Shepherd Brooks needed no landscape architect to develop the natural beauty of their estates. These landed proprietors loved the land. They were also practical farmers, understanding the raising of vegetables, the rotation of crops, the care of cows, the laying of stone walls and the grading of roadways. Not only did they direct the practical operation of their farms, but with equal success they enhanced the natural beauty of their ample acres by planting gar-

dens and opening vistas through the trees. Indeed with special care were the trees preserved and developed, following the practice advocated by Professor Sargent of Arboretum fame. In fact, in the thriving trees of various kinds, the great beeches, perhaps notably in the magnificent canoe birch in front of the stone mansion, and in the tupeloes about the pond, are exemplified the fine traditions of intelligent landscaping.

Turning from the land to the land owners, no account is complete which does not record that the generosity of the Brooks family is stamped in many ways upon the history of Medford. The original Brooks school, a name since borne by its successor, was the gift of Edward Brooks, son of Peter Chardon Brooks, senior. The delta, at the meeting of High and Grove streets, was laid out by the latter, and for many years after him the trees and shrubs were kept in order by his son and grandson. In the collection of silver belonging to the First Parish church are two silver flagons presented by him in 1823. It was the same benefactor who built in 1846 the granite wall along the east side of the old burying ground, where so many of his ancestors lie buried. In 1869, Mrs. Ellen Brooks, widow of Gorham Brooks, with her two sons, Shepherd and Peter C. the third, gave both land and church edifice to Grace Episcopal church. In 1897 the Commonwealth received from the latter a gift of forty acres of land once owned by the Middlesex Canal Corporation, now a part of the Mystic Valley parkway. The Whitmore brook reservation was created in 1901 out of land presented to the Commonwealth by Peter C. and Shepherd Brooks. Brooks road, on the east side of the South Winchester reservoir, owes its plan and construction to the gift of the same two brothers in 1905. Shepherd Brooks made feasible for West Medford a suitable approach to Oak Grove cemetery, through the extension of Playstead road, and gave additional land for the enlargement of the cemetery. In 1924, the heirs of Shepherd Brooks, through his son

Gorham Brooks, made a gift to the city of the Flat Iron lot on Grove street for a public park. In 1926 another portion of that estate was made over as a bird sanctuary open to the public, the latest of the many benefactions which are barely listed here.

It was two hundred and sixty-seven years ago that the original estate came into the ownership of the Brooks family. In the course of those years it has been divided and subdivided. Much of it has gone into other hands. Of the original domain there is still retained in the later generations of the family a generous spread of acres of both open and wooded land. Some of the changes that have come to pass in these landholdings I have noted here. Happily it is not for us yet to record the passing of the entire estate.

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#### THE ROAD THROUGH THE WOODS.

It was a mile and three-quarters long. Originally longer, it extended from the Menotomy corn mill on Mystic river and crossed the way to the weare, where in 1660 was a dwelling in lease-hold of one Golden Moor. It was the country road from Cambridge to Woburn, and doubtless lay over the Indian trail followed by Myles Standish on his memorable journey of September 21, 1621, the first recorded visit of white men to what became our ancient town of Medford.

It is one of our oldest roads. Two centuries and a half after the death of the old Indian king on the crown of the hill, there was erected the "grey stone house" of Peter C. Brooks (third of the name), who has but a few years since passed away. So only two families have succeeded the Indian on these hilltops as residents.

This old road is certainly of great interest, as the county records show that in 1693 the court considered it an "ancient highway," and in 1709 a committee reported its view of two localities, which report discon-

tinued the former southern end, the more "ancient road where Wheeler his mill formerly stood." October, 1709, it reported, "Beginning at Adams his gate in Menotomy, allowing three rods in breadth to the Weares, where the road now lyeth a long time improved, and from said weares to Ebenezer Brooks his gate which is between said Brooks and John Francis, and from said Brooks his gate to Symms his farm, . . . assuring to Samuel Brooks the barn one end of which stands in the highway while the barn stands, and no longer."

No name was given this road, but the committee told of considering the way to Convers' mill in Woburn (recently Whitney's in Winchester). A short road ran from this to the mill of Symmes (now Wedgemere) which from 1754 to 1851 was in "Upper Medford." To this day there are but three or four houses southward from that short road.

It remains a country road, with no dwellings, for a mile to the stone farmhouse and Lowell railway. It is beautiful for situation, the rising hill on one side and the shining lakes and higher hills on the other, but in recent years less used since the opening of the Mystic Valley parkway. Stone walls four feet high border either side, overgrown with woodbine and unbroken save only at entrance drives. No sidewalks are needed, but instead grassy borders and natural shrubbery, including the brilliant barberry and sumac. It is still a road through the woods. Though the old-time forest is gone, it is replaced by the modern forestry of the later generation of owners. Historian Brooks gives a glimpse of it in 1789:—

Thomas Brooks, Esq., "marrying justice," while riding on horseback to Woburn, discovered a party of six young persons riding toward him. He guessed their errand; and they guessed that the cocked hat, bush wig, and silver buckles approaching them belonged to "the squire." The bridegroom announced his wishes, and the squire replied thus: "My young friends, we are here in the midst of this lofty forest, on an unfrequented road, with God's clear sky above and his green earth beneath and we will not be



disturbed. I propose to solemnize your marriage here. What say you?" They gladly consented. Telling them not to dismount, he arranged them in order, ladies and gentlemen facing each other, with his own horse between the bride and groom. Then taking off his hat, he began his prayer; and report said he was "gifted in prayer," and on this occasion "prayed like an angel." The plight of vows was made, the union declared, benediction pronounced, and the whole party journeyed back together, rejoicing in the poetry appended to the great event.

Perhaps romance, as well as poetry, attached to this road through the woods, as in later years, it, as well as the tow-path of the canal, was a veritable "lovers' lane."

We recall that after the ceremony many years ago another happy couple rode over the same "unfrequented road" one moonlight night to their new home in the *West End* of Medford. It was then known as Grove street, but not till about a century ago it was announced by the selectmen thus: From High street near the canal bridge by P. C. Brooks' to Symmes corner, *Grove street*. This reminds us that the Middlesex canal had been cut through the Brooks land and in operation in 1803. The bridge at High street was somewhat elevated and one was required to unite the dissevered parts of his estate. In 1820, Mr. Brooks, at his own expense, had built one of granite, an elliptical arch of marvelous beauty and construction. After the closing of the canal it was ever kept in excellent condition until it passed into new ownership which failed to appreciate its historic worth to the new village and used it in cellar wall building. But at the other end of the Brooks property, just a century ago, the canal company rebuilt their Aberjona aqueduct of granite, within the estimated cost and so it would require no repairs for a century. Thus said the agent in his annual report. Alas for human calculations. The canal's rival, the Boston and Lowell railroad, cut another way through the estate and began the quicker travel by steam power in 1835. In 1860, the city of Charlestown built its water-works, raising the level of the upper pond six feet by the erection of a dam at the narrow strait known



as The Partings. At that time there was a large, extensive woodland in that vicinity, utilized in that work. The contour of the upper pond was much changed, the mouth of the Aberjona became up-stream where was once the Symmes mill, thus destroying its water-power. Later came the Mystic valley parkway, over whose surface the modern automobiles so rapidly roll along.

Grove street, once the road through the woods, has lost none of its beauty and charm, and may some day vie with its neighbors across the water, Interlaken and Morningside.

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#### OUR NEW VOLUME.

With this issue the REGISTER begins its thirtieth volume. We regret that its coming during the last year has been so delayed and that its pages have been somewhat less in number.

Yet we feel that the subjects treated have not been neglected and that its efforts have brought commendation. With the last issue was completed the editor's eighteenth year of service. In recognition of the need, two assistants have been appointed, who, we trust, will take over the efforts of former years, and we look hopefully to the REGISTER's future.

In all the years its pages have been expressly for Medford history, and much of interest has been thus gathered and preserved. From its pages may be gleaned an account of the Society's meetings, though not a dry record of "Proceedings."

In last year's first issue is a list of our membership, which we wish increased.

We would (space permitting) be glad to tell of our exchanges, which are a constant addition to our library. Especially we commend its examination to our members and readers.

We desire in coming numbers to note especially Medford's growth in the Fulton Heights section, the Stearns

estate that was; Traincroft and Lawrence estates; and not least by any means, the Brooks estate as now so rapidly changing, using maps partially prepared by the late Shepherd Brooks.

With the old distillery, Medford inn and the Masonic hall and railroad station just demolished, has come a transition the REGISTER should note.

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### PATRIOT'S DAY.

As the REGISTER goes to press, another notable anniversary approaches. Our Society, by the hearty co-operation of our vigorous neighbor, will, in the large hall of the Woman's Club, on evening of April 18, visualize something of that early day which was a "glorious morning for America."

We are also looking forward to that Tercentenary day of Greater Boston which will be unitedly observed by Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, Somerville, Dorchester and Medford. Of course, by common consent, 1930 will be the year of observance, and much will be made of the coming of Governor John Winthrop and company, on June 17.

But William Blaxton, Samuel Maverick, Thomas Walford, who preceded him in various places as actual residents, will not be forgotten, nor indeed, will Medford fail to mention that Cradock's men were here settled and at work in 1628, when the explorers came from Salem to discover Charlestown. Medford was a pioneer hereabouts.

---

### SLOW POND

In the article on the Brooks Estates I have referred to "Slow pond" as "Brooks pond." Although popularly so-called at times, this body of water still rightfully bears the old name of "Slow pond."

— RICHARD B. COOLIDGE.



### OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

Above is a view of the home of Caleb Brooks, the birthplace of Dr. John Brooks, soldier of the Revolution and Governor of Massachusetts for six years. At his birth it was within the Charlestown territory which became Upper Medford in 1754 and Winchester in 1850 and locally known as Symmes Corner. For a fuller statement see REGISTER, Vol. XIV, p. 18.

The illustrations of the residences of Thomas Brooks and Peter Chardon Brooks are reproduced from the steel engravings in Brooks' History in 1855, A. L. Rawson, del., and F. T. Stuart, Sc., executed in the then most approved method prior to photographic work.

That of Thomas Brooks shows clearly the three rare black-walnut trees, and the brick wall built by his negro, Pomp. Incidentally, note the railway engine and cars of that early date.

The second is that erected 1802-5 by Peter Chardon Brooks, demolished 1915.

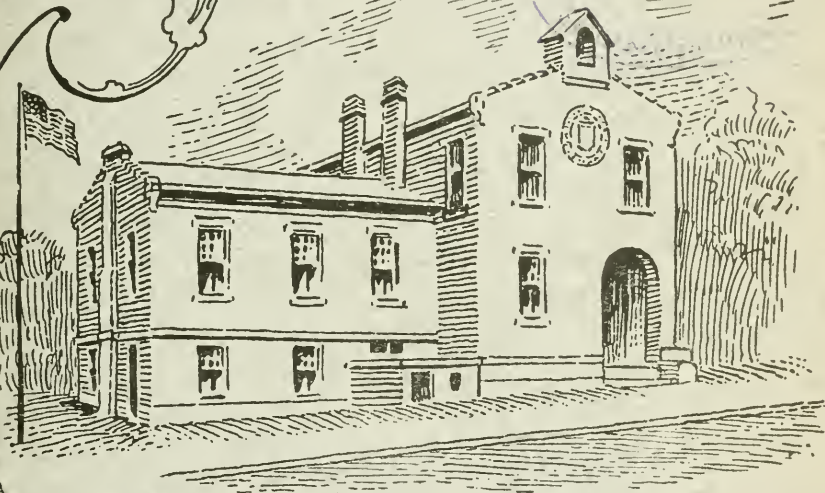
Our frontispiece shows the "grey stone house" of Peter C. Brooks, 3d, built 1860, and the home of Shepherd Brooks, 1880.



Vol. XXX.]

[No. 2.]

# HISTORICAL REGISTER



June, 1927

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

GREEN



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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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Exchange list in charge of GEO. S. T. FULLER, 15 George Street.

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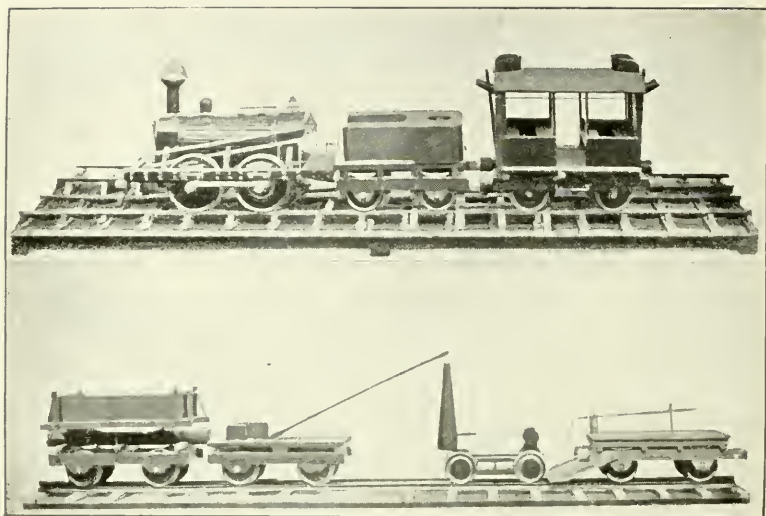
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### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_





MODELS OF FIRST ENGINE AND CARS

Receipt of the B. & O. medal (p. 47) suggests our use of the Waterman Brown models which make a faithful and instructive exhibit of the earliest railroad times. Mr. Brown skilfully and laboriously made them with but one hand, and they have been carefully preserved. His grave in Woodbrook cemetery, Woburn, is marked by two granite "sleepers" crossed by an iron rail taken from the original track.

# The Medford Historical Register.

VOL. XXX.

JUNE, 1927.

No. 2.

## THE BAY PATH.

[Read before the Medford Historical Society by Mr. Wilson Fiske.]

SO GOOD a historian as Lord Macaulay declared that of all human inventions, the alphabet and the printing press excepted, those inventions which abridge distance (that is, which promote inter-communication) had done most for mankind. Which is equivalent to saying that man rises above the savage only when and only so far as he establishes communication and effects co-operation with his fellows. And Macaulay knew not the telegraph, the telephone, the wireless, the airplane, the automobile, the bicycle—hardly the locomotive. How must we be civilized now? Now I propose to speak of the *road* and *a* road; and the road is the very sign and symbol of inter-communication.

This must have been recognized a very long time ago. If we would seek the best word on roads and road-making (which is not the last word, but perhaps more nearly the first) we must look back more than five and twenty centuries to the utterances of the prophet of Israel, whose exhortation and instructions—and promise—fit here so aptly that I venture to make a very direct and practical, nor by any means wholly materialistic, application of them. Isaiah wrote:

Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord,

Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low

And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain;

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it.

How many billions have been spent—railways, highways, even waterways—to follow out that rule, than

which there is no better! And the glory of the Lord *is* revealed thereby. Does not all flesh profit? Have we not by thousands, millions, looked down into Niagara's gorge from the rail and the highroad? Have we not scaled Mt. Washington to view the Presidential range, and conquered Pike's Peak to measure the Rockies? Have we not crossed the country and seen revealed the wealth of harvests, the majesty of continental ranges, the beauties of stream and lake and forest? When truly all roads led to Rome (and Roman roads were built after the same rule) was not Rome the glory and the mistress of the world? And her roads contributed much thereto.

Still earlier, when the earliest civilizations flourished in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, a military and commercial road led from Babylon to Memphis. And along that road sprang up Nineveh, Damascus, Palmyra, Antioch, Tyre. Even on our own continent the ancient rule was made plain. For among the values which Spain here destroyed were magnificent Mexican roads, and at least two roads, each more than fifteen hundred miles long, extending the whole length of the empire of the Incas — the one along the coastal plain, where agriculture flourished as in Egypt, and for the same reason; the other among or along the Andean foothills. By the way, these roads were for foot passage only, for the Peruvians had no beasts of burden.

But the way of the Lord has been prepared in the wilderness many times along far less finished paths than these. Perhaps we have all been in St. Louis and have stood by the Court house (we all go to the Court house to gaze upon the erewhile Slave Mart at its southern front) and we must have read the inscription which recites that there began the Sante Fe trail, and we moralized upon what that led to. And if we went further out in the state, to St. Joseph, we found there the beginning of the trail of the pony express riders, and remember their services to the world.

Howbeit I have set myself to speak of an older path,



shorter, nearer home, and just as truly a maker of history — the road which linked the Bay colonies with the settlements on the Connecticut. It was commonly called at its eastern end the Connecticut path, at its western terminal the Bay path. My own acquaintance with it touched more nearly its western third, and I like to think of it as the Bay path. At first only an Indian trail, or probably a series of trails, worn deep in places by the single file processions, but never broad; it afterwards widened to a woods' road when the white colonists moved over it their families, their possessions and even their cattle, becoming a cart track when the traffic grew to the dignity of wheeled vehicles. Some parts of the ancient trail now are covered by the highways over which we drive without a thought of their story; some parts may be located only by diligent search of colonial records; some few parts may still be traced by cart ruts worn in granite floors across ridges and pastures and hills now scorned of the road-builder. For the aboriginal trail maker, while he avoided inconvenient swamps and thickets, was little troubled with worldly goods whose transportation contra-indicated the handicap of grades; and sometimes the elevations had their own advantages in his view.

We shall remember that very early in its life the Bay colony had vital interests in the valley of the "Long river." On May 6, 1635 (I quote from the Mass. Col. Records)—

"Att the Gen'all Court, holden at Newtowne, There is liberty granted to the inhabitants of Waterton to remove themselves to any place they shall thinke meete to make choice of Prided they continue still under this government." And on the same date, "The inhabitants of Roxbury have liberty granted them to remove themselves to any place they shall think meete, not to prejudice another plantation provided they continue still under this government." Manifestly our forbears had no stomach for secession. And on June 3, 1635, there

was "Leave granted to the inhabitants of Dorchester for their removal."

These licenses were not long left unused. On the same May 6th William Pynchon of Roxbury presented himself at the General Court with his accounts as treasurer, which being audited, he was discharged from his responsibility. He went immediately to Agawam (Springfield) and preëmpted that location for the Roxbury party. He is said to have visited the valley in 1634. The Dorchester Association had pioneers in Windsor in the latter part of June, 1635, led overland by Roger Ludlow.

Sixteen thirty-six was a year of great activity in the westward trek. Pynchon's Roxbury party began the journey about April 26th, the *Blessing of the Bay* sailing from Boston with their goods about the same time. At least twelve families went in this party, and on May 14th the men of the party signed a declaration and agreement for a town government. I have not read this document, but apparently we had here another Mayflower compact. They obtained a deed of their lands from the Indians on July 15, 1636.

On May 31, 1636, according to Winthrop's history, "The Rev. Thomas Hooker, pastor of the Church of Newtowne, and most of his congregation, went to Connecticut. His wife was carried in a horse litter; and they drove one hundred and sixty cattle, and fed of their milk by the way." This party went, as we all remember, to Hartford, which, however, had been settled in part from New Amsterdam in 1633.

The Bay path left the Roxbury-Dedham road at the north end of Jamaica pond, whence it led nearly westward into Newtowne, and crossed the Charles just above Newton Upper Falls. Thence bearing more southwestwardly to Wellesley, it crossed north of lake Waban over the present college campus, and so through Natick and Framingham, south of Cochituate lake and over the Beaver dam, which both the highway and the B. & A. tracks now cross, into Ashland; crossing Cold Spring

brook well above (south of) its junction with Sudbury river, at the point where the Rev. John Eliot selected, on the "old Connecticut path," as he called it, a location for the establishment of his seventh "village of praying Indians."

Still bearing southwestward, to Hopkinton, the track there swung round the north end of Whitehall pond and through southern Westboro into Grafton, crossing the Nipnet (Blackstone) river at a ford now within the village of Millbury. Dropping still more sharply southward, the path descended Federal hill into Oxford, and thence ran westward into Charlton, and by a rather circuitous way over Fisk hill into Sturbridge. There it led through what has been called Tantaskwee pass, exactly where the Worcester-Southbridge-Springfield trolley line passes to Fiskdale.

Between Fiskdale and Brimfield (being still in Sturbridge) it touches the southern edge of the thousand acre tract which John Eliot had from the Indians in 1655. In Brimfield the path passed Quabaug Old Fort, of which I shall speak again. Thence westward into Monson, the path strikes just south of the Chicopee river at the town line, and follows the river to Palmer, the summit of the path reaching an altitude of eleven hundred feet in crossing the divide between the Quinnebaug and the Quabaug, or Chicopee, watersheds. West from Palmer the way led around the north end of Wilbraham mountains to North Wilbraham village, whence it passed southwestward into Springfield, opening from the brow of the hill on which now stands the Arsenal.

Springfield was a junction of many Indian trails. From the Arsenal one trail led down to the river, through what is now Forest park, to a point opposite the lower mouth of the Agawam or Westfield river, where the highway now crosses, and at which point was an Indian stronghold or fort. At that time (before the Agawam cut through its upper mouth, a century ago) an extensive shoal stretched out from the west shore and the river

was fordable at low water. After crossing the river the trail westward became the Mohawk trail. And still further west, crossing the Hudson, it was the Iroquois trail.

Southward from the crossing of the Connecticut another trail on the east side led round the shoulder of Longmeadow hill through "Longmeadow gate," crossed the river at Windsor, and so to Hartford. This was sometimes called the Longmeadow path.

In many of the towns along the way the first settlers located their meeting-houses and town centers on the Bay path. This was clearly so in Grafton, Oxford, Charlton, Sturbridge and Brimfield. And perhaps I may speak of the settlement of Sturbridge as possibly more or less typical.

J. G. Holland says:

It was wonderful what a powerful interest was attached to the Bay path. It was the channel through which laws were communicated, through which flowed news from distant friends, and through which came long, loving letters and messages. It was the vaulted passage along which echoed the voices that called from across the ocean, and through which, like low-toned thunder, rolled the din of the great world. That rough thread of soil, chopped by the blades of a hundred streams, was a bond that radiated at each terminus into a thousand fibers of love and interest, and hope and memory.

It was the one way left open through which the sweet tide of sympathy might flow. Every rod had been prayed over, by friends on the journey and friends at home. If every traveler had raised his Ebenezer, as the morning dawned upon his trust-sleep, the monuments would have risen and stood like milestones.

But it was also associated with fears, and the imagination often clothed it with terrors of which experience and observation had furnished only sparsely scattered hints. The boy, as he heard the stories of the path, went slowly to bed, and dreamed of lithe wildcats, squatted stealthily on overhanging limbs, or the long leap through the air upon the doomed horseman, and the terrible death in the woods. Or, in the midnight camp, he heard through the low forest arches the long-drawn howl of the hungry wolf.

Or, sleeping in his tent or by his fire, he was awakened by the crackling sticks, and lying breathless, heard a lonely bear, as

he snuffed and grunted about his ears. Or, riding along blithely, and thinking of no danger, a band of straying Pequots arose, with swift arrows, to avenge the massacre of their kindred.

The Bay path was charmed ground—a precious passage—and during the spring, the summer, the early autumn, hardly a settler at Agawam went out of doors, or changed his position in the fields, or looked up from his labor, or rested on his oars upon the bosom of the river, without turning his eyes to the point at which that path opened from the brow of the wooded hill upon the east, where now the bell of the huge arsenal tells hourly of the coming of a stranger along the path of time.

And when some worn and weary man came in sight upon his half-starved horse, or two or three pedestrians, bending beneath their packs and swinging their sturdy staves, were seen approaching, the village was astir from one end to the other.

Whoever the comer might be, he was welcomed with a cordiality and universality that was not as much an evidence of hospitality, perhaps, as of the wish to hear of the welfare of those who were loved, or to feel the kiss of one more wave from the great ocean of the world. And when one of the settlers started forth upon the journey to the Bay, with his burden of letters and messages and his numberless commissions for petty purchases, the event was one well known to every individual, and the adventurer received the benefit of public prayers for the prosperity of his passage and the safety of his return.

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### FOREWORD.

The Medford Historical Society, in its recognition of the Nineteenth of April, 1927, attempted to visualize the life in this town on that famous day in 1775. The two pageant-plays, as they may be called, are based on historic fact and well-grounded tradition, and embody in dramatic form the excitement, confusion and life of the day. The first is called "The Tavern in the Square," and is supposed to take place near the Royal Oak tavern shortly before noon. For the sake of dramatic brevity the events of the next three or four hours are condensed into a short play. The second is called "The Roadside Farm," and has for its background the home of the Rev. Edward Brooks, which stood on the west side of Grove street, West Medford, and the time is late in the same afternoon.



The historic facts on which the plays are based are as follows: Medford was the first stop of the rider Paul Revere, who notified Captain Isaac Hall. It is not known when the Medford minutemen left, but they undoubtedly sent another rider to Malden, and tradition says that they engaged the British at Merriam's corner near Concord. Other unorganized volunteers followed in their wake, among them Henry Putnam, in 1758 a lieutenant in the Louisburg campaign and past the age of military service. Seizing the flintlock as his wife asked if he were going without his dinner, he answered, "I am going to take powder and balls for my dinner today, or give them some." Another was the Rev. Edward Brooks. From his house opposite the old slave wall on the western side of Grove street he too went to Lexington, and with full-bottomed wig, rode on horseback, his gun on his shoulder. From the garret window of that house his son Peter listened to the guns at Menotomy and saw them glistening in the sun.

As the day wore on armed provincials from other towns trooped through the square.\* The road between Medford and Salem was the highway leading to the country northeast of Boston. Seventy-six men from Malden, with drums beating, marched to Medford under orders to proceed to Watertown. Near Cradock bridge the company halted while the whereabouts of the British was verified, and then at noon proceeded through the town to Menotomy. At some hour of the morning thirty-eight men from Lynn marched through Medford. The word reached Salem and Danvers at about nine o'clock in the morning of the nineteenth. The Danvers men, three hundred and thirty-one of them, without waiting for a full regiment set off at nine o'clock. Before noon they came striding through Medford, and in four hours did the march of sixteen miles to Menotomy. There seven of their young men were killed.

\* See HISTORICAL REGISTER, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, "Medford and Her Minutemen, April 19, 1775," by Richard B. Coolidge.

The day, in the meantime, had become very warm and dry, for the season was so advanced that along the wayside was the waving grass of summer. Over the same route, in the afternoon, as far as the square, came three hundred men from Salem. They turned down the Charlestown road where, as they reached the top of Winter hill at the edge of early evening, they witnessed the running fight upon the exhausted British. To the minutemen Abigail Brooks, wife of the Rev. Edward Brooks, served chocolate. At nightfall her husband came back, bringing on his own horse Lieutenant Gould of the King's Own, who, wounded in the ankle at Concord, was proceeding in a chaise to Boston when he was captured by the old men of Menotomy. In Medford he wrote, "I am now treated with the greatest humanity and taken all possible care of." He remained as captive and guest with the Brookses until his wound was healed and he was exchanged.

In addition to the minutemen there were many "embattled farmers" who must have passed through Medford to the fight. Lieut. Frederick Mackenzie,\* who has given the only contemporary account of the battle, and who was in the Welsh Fusileers, reports that many farmers rode within a short distance of the fighting, tied their horses and crept near enough to the moving column to get in a few shots and then went back to their horses, rode along again until they came abreast the column, dismounted, hitched, fired, and returned, repeating the same tactics until their ammunition was exhausted.

The characters are historic, and patterned as closely after the originals as knowledge will permit. Jonathan Porter, the innkeeper, was from Malden only two years before. His tavern had been the resort of British officers, but after the battle of Lexington he changed the name of the Royal Oak to Porter's Tavern. The original sign is still in existence, with bullet holes said to have been caused by minutemen returning from

\* "A British Fusileer," edited by Allen French.

Lexington. Porter himself later enlisted in the Continental army and contributed money to the cause. Abigail was a thirteen-year-old daughter of Capt. Isaac Hall. Belinda was an old slave of Colonel Royall, who later memorialized the legislature for compensation. Harry Bond was a Scotch-Irish blacksmith who had a shop at the corner of Mystic avenue, at which gathered the patriots to discuss the news of the Royalls and the Tories. Bond was killed at the battle of Bunker hill. Stephen Hall, a man of seventy, was on the Committee of Correspondence, a prominent business man who helped finance the colonial cause. Dr. Simon Tufts, the town doctor, was a great friend of Colonel Royall and executor of his estate during his absence. He tended the wounded brought back from Bunker hill. Sarah Bradlee Fulton was the leading woman patriot of Medford. She helped disguise her husband and friends as Indians for the Boston teaparty, and tended the wounded after Bunker hill. When Washington wanted a dispatch sent to Boston she walked by night to Charlestown, rowed herself across the river, delivered her message safely and returned by morning to her home. In the second play Mrs. Putnam is the wife of Henry Putnam who was killed at Lexington. Nancy and Mercy Brooks are the eighteen- and twelve-year-old nieces of Abigail, who lived in the house behind the slave wall on the east side of Grove street. Abigail Brooks is another heroic figure, who not only ministered to the minutemen, but who, after the death of her husband, a victim to his patriotism, brought up her family with rare management, and has among her descendants Phillips Brooks, Francis Parkman and Peter Chardon Brooks.

## THE TAVERN IN THE SQUARE.

BY RUTH DAME COOLIDGE.

*Scene, Medford Square, before Royal Oak Tavern.**Afternoon, April 19, 1775.*

## CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF ENTRANCE.

BELINDA. Old colored woman in service of Isaac Royall.

ABIGAIL. Thirteen-year-old daughter of Capt. Isaac Hall.

HARRY BOND. Blacksmith from Mystic Avenue. Scotch-Irish; killed at Bunker Hill; patriots met and discussed at his home.

JONATHAN PORTER, proprietor of Royal Oak Tavern. Twenty-seven years old; came to Medford from Malden, 1773; commissioned second lieutenant, 1776.

STEPHEN HALL. Seventy-one years old; called Honorable and Gentleman; served in legislature and on committee of advice.

SARAH BRADLEE FULTON. Aged twenty-three; energetic, patriotic woman; carried despatches to Boston by order of Washington; assisted in disguising husband and brothers for Boston Tea Party.

DR. SIMON TUFTS. Forty-eight years old; representative to General Court, 1772-1775; trusted friend and trustee of Isaac Royall; attended wounded soldiers after Bunker Hill.

MINUTEMAN.

*Enter Belinda carrying basket. Spies about her. Enter Abigail Hall, following her curiously about.*

ABIGAIL. What are you looking for, Belinda?

BELINDA. Sh, sh, sh!

ABIGAIL. What are you looking for?

BELINDA (*coming close to her*). De Ebil One.

ABIGAIL. The Ebil One?

BELINDA. Didn't you hear him aridin' by de house de odder night? I done wake up in de night and de moon was shinin' all along de road, and bimeby I heer a thumpety thump, thumpety thump, and a horse's hoofs cam thuddin' up de street from Boston town. 'Thumpety thump he come up ober de hill, and I dassent look out for fear of de Ebil One callin' me and all de wicked ones out. But thumpety thump he done gallop by ole massi's house like all de fiends was aridin' wid him,—and go away in de dark.

ABIGAIL. Why, Belinda, 'twas no Evil One! 'Twas the express riding to warn the minutemen. The king's troops are after our powder up at Concord.

BELINDA. You be only a lil gal. I know. I know. Ole Belinda know when de Ebil One ride by.

ABIGAIL. But, Belinda, he stopped at my father's house and rapped at the door and father ran to the window, and I ran to mine, for my window is under the eaves right over the street, and what do you suppose he said?

BELINDA. De day ob doom, ye wicked rebels!

ABIGAIL (*drawing back*). He said "There 'll be noise enough soon. The regulars are out." And father dressed and sent me flying to cousin Timothy and cousin Moses and cousin Stephen, and he sent another express to Malden and —

BELINDA. Astirrin' up trouble, trouble, trouble. 'Twas de Ebil One.

ABIGAIL. I reckon he was stirring up trouble for your master, Colonel Royall, old Belinda. You'd have thought so if you'd seen all the windows with candles in them in the middle of the night, and mother melting bullets and the men come running in, their flintlocks in their hands. And then in the early dawn my brave father marching away at the head of our minute-men. (*Distant crack of gun or cannon.*)

BELINDA (*starting*). Guns, guns a-crackin'! War, war, don' you hear de war beginnin'?

ABIGAIL. Surely they must defend themselves, but I heard father say "Don't fire unless you are fired upon. We mustn't be first."

BELINDA. More guns. I tell you, chile, I do know this. Dat gallopin' horseman, ef he be a man or de Debil, he bring trouble to ole massa. Massa gone away, ride away in his coach and neber come back, neber come back.

ABIGAIL. He'll come home when the fighting's over.

BELINDA. Go way cross de sea and neber come back. Trouble, trouble.

ABIGAIL. Here comes the blacksmith that lives by the Royall House, Master Bond. You'd best get him to give you a horseshoe to keep away the Evil One.

BOND (*musket in one hand, hammer in the other, looking after Belinda as she exits*). If 'twas the old days I believe they'd hang her for a witch, the old Tory. (*Sound of distant guns.*)

ABIGAIL. Oh! Master Bond, which way be you going, to shoe horses or to fight?

BOND (*ignoring her*). Either I be deaf with the clanging of my own forge or there be guns up the road. I' faith, girl, I know not which to do. I'm bound I'll serve the cause.

ABIGAIL. I do believe all the men of the countryside save ye, Master Bond, have gone by our house this morning, hot foot to Lexington, and if I ran out to them they walked by me, as if I were a tree. Why don't you go to the fight, Master Bond?

BOND. Why don't I? You'd best run home and read your Mother Goose instead of hanging around the square and talking to your elders. Open it, too, let me tell you, to the page where it says, "For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the rider was lost, for want of a rider the battle —" (*Exit Abigail, shamefacedly.*)

BOND (*weighing gun and hammer*). I'd rather use my gun, and sure 'tis hard for a strong man to see other men all marching off to fight and to stay like a woman at home, going clang, clang on my anvil. (*Enter Porter.*) Master Porter, what news, I pray you?

PORTER. News aplenty. The town is full of news, but how much we may believe that is the trouble. Most certain 'tis there has been fighting, and they say much blood is shed.

BOND. Blood! That will be a red flag to our boys. How many have passed by your tavern today?

PORTER. Company after company from the north, and men and boys trailing after them, and farmers on horseback to get in a shot or two, all in a most prodigious hurry.

BOND. And in too great a hurry to stop at the Royal Oak and exchange news.

PORTER. I never saw men so hot upon their way, as if every minute counted.





TABLEAU—THE BIRTH OF THE FLAG  
 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MRS. CORA B. JERROLD

WASHINGTON

(Rev. Louis C. Dehliels)

SPECTATORS

(Walter Magoon, Wilson Fiske)

BETSY ROSS

(Mrs. Katherine A. G. Bartlett)



SOME CHARACTERS IN "THE TAVERN IN THE SQUARE"

SARAH BRADLEE FULTON

JONATHAN PORTER

DR. TUFTS

HARRY BOND

BELINDA

STEPHEN HALL



“THE ROADSIDE FARM”

REV. EDWARD BROOKS  
MRS. ABIGAIL BROOKS  
LECTURENT GOULD  
MRS. FULHAM  
ANDREW  
JOSEPH  
NANCY BROOKS

A century and a half ago there was no photography to "visualize" the actors of the "Royal Oak Tavern." By courtesy of Mr. John F. Maguire, Jr., of the *Boston Globe*, we present part of those who personated them on the evening of April 18, 1927. From left to right they were Mrs. Marguerite Lewis, William G. Scott, Walter Magoun, Sidney Palmer, Miss Adelaide Herriot, Wilson Fiske.

The minutemen were represented by Chester Sinnott and Charles DeLaurier, and Abigail Hall by Miss Katharin F. Howe.

At the "Roadside Farm" all were present and were (left to right) Miss Sarah Cressey, Rev. Louis C. Dethlefs, Mrs. Mabel F. Butler, Gordon Heywood, Mrs. Lilla B. Chamberlin, Parker Hart, Mrs. Alice E. LaRose, Fritz Walking. Peter C. Brooks was up in the attic, a voice behind the scenes by Walter Tufts.



BOND. Minutemen of course, and ready in a minute, too, weren't they? Last August you mind how Gage sent the redcoats up to the powder house to take our powder?

PORTER. I mind it well, and we men stood yonder, our hands on our hips, and watched them, perforce, while they took it away under our noses.

BOND. Took it away right out of Medford, didn't they, to Castle William—all they found there, anyhow?

PORTER. And what they didn't find had taken wings, hadn't it?

BOND. Well, it flew away somewhere, but I guess it will fly home again today. And the redcoats will get it today—but in the powder-pans of our flintlocks with leaden bullets behind it. (*Still distant sound of guns.*) Hist, was that firing?

PORTER. Some of our Medford powder, perchance. I wonder if our boys did fight!

BOND. Fight? I only wish I were as certain of the locks I've put on guns this morning. Know you (*nudging him*) where most of the locks came from?

PORTER. I know where the gun-stocks came from—our wood-lots furnish them forth with a little labor, but where did all these volunteers get their locks?

BOND. From his gracious majesty, King George.

PORTER. How mean you?

BOND. Well, King George is none too generous to his redcoats. They are glad to get odd jobs about town to fill their pockets, and so when our lads slip up to the barracks with a bottle of good old Medford smuggled under the tails of their coats, there be many a lobster who has been willing to do trade for it with the lock of a gun.

PORTER. A poor trade they'll find that today. I reckon many a poor lad will rue his bargain. (*Fife and drum drawing nearer.*)

BOND. Another sound of fife and drum. Yes, more minutemen down the Salem road.

PORTER. 'Tis the boys from Malden. I know every man of them. I'll to them. (*Enter Stephen Hall, limping, with cane.*)

BOND. Ah, Master Hall, a word with you!

HALL. What men are those?

BOND. Malden men. They seem to hesitate, loathe to lose a chance to fight. If they go to Menotomy the king's troops may be already on the Charlestown highway or perhaps to Cambridge. (*Sound of distant cannon.*)

HALL. Whichever way they march back to the shelter of their boats, 'tis evident they are testing the mettle of our men with their cannon.

BOND. Ay, cannon, Master Hall. 'Tis that was troubling me, so that I left my work and came here. Where are our Medford guns, the seven cannon we brought out here in November hid in loads of hay and wood? Are they safe, or are these troops on their way to take them also?

HALL. They are safe, nor do I think that General Gage knows aught of them.

BOND. But suppose the British should send some men-of-war up the Mystic to Cradock bridge to help their soldiers in their retreat?

HALL. Know you, good smith, what Medford should have? Fireboats,\*

\* Fireboats were built in Medford in June, 1775. "Medford in the Revolution," H. T. Wild.



man, by the corner of the bridge, ready to set on fire and turn upon any hostile boat that comes nosing up our stream.

BOND (*rubbing his hands*). Fireboats! A mighty thought! I would that the British men-of-war would come up the river. Then we'd look up the stream and we'd see those Tory boats come sailing on, all unknowing, and suddenly our fireboats would go flaming down upon them, flaring like my forge, and the British sailors would bend to their oars and go flying down stream, past Labor-in-vain and out to the harbor. Heaven help the troops coming back this way and hoping to reach their boats, and Labor-in-vain for that too. They'll have hot fighting enough.

HALL. Nay, nay, Bond, if the fighting gets too hot for them up there, as from the number of men who have passed us I think perhaps it may, they'll never take this long road through Medford to Boston, but strike straight for Charlestown and the shelter of their ships.

BOND. And shelter they'll need if I am any judge of the minutemen of Medford. And look you here, Master Hall, there are more men at home today who could not be in the firing line who would welcome a chance to do battle with them here.

HALL. Yes, Bond, you would fight, I know, as bravely as you speak, but today there are men enough upon the road. The country-side has rung to alarm bells all the last twelve hours. (*Sound of fife and drum.*)

BOND. There go the Malden men. They have determined on Menotomy. Huzzay, boys, on with you! The rascals came here and stole our powder! Don't let them steal any more! Fight 'em, boys, fight 'em! Don't let a man forget what we owe 'em! Give 'em back their powder! (*Exit shouting.*)

HALL. Would I too were young, but I can serve on the Committee of Supplies and watch the river and the square. They also serve who only stand and wait. (*Sits down at back of scene.*)

PORTER (*returning visibly stirred*). My friends of Malden whom I knew before I settled here two years ago. Brave boys. I gave them a glass around to wet their whistles. (*Enter Sarah Bradlee Fulton and Abigail.*)

MRS. FULTON. A glass around is well enough, Master Porter, but think you, what else will they need when they return?

PORTER. Mistress Fulton, they are welcome again at my expense.

MRS. FULTON. Nay, it was not of food nor drink that I thought, but of those who may have been wounded.

PORTER. The wounded. You are right. Would we could settle our rights without bloodshed. The king's officers who stop so often at my Royal Oak — gentlemen! courteous! and free with their money, too. They've made me join them in many a glass of flip. It would go hard to raise a flint-lock in their smiling faces.

MRS. FULTON. They will not be smiling today, Master Porter. But 'tis pity that these soldiers should be the tools of their masters.

PORTER. Of course we have done our best to conciliate their masters, but they would not listen. I cannot help but sorrow for the luckless soldiers.

MRS. FULTON. Who is not with us is against us, Master Porter. There was Isaac Royall, now. The town of Medford did love him well, but he fled. Even the gifts he gave to Medford will hardly make the people forgive him, especially if they lose sons at Lexington.

PORTER. True, true, but Colonel Royall wished to fight for the colony. You know well that last Sunday he did but ride into town to chapel, and General Howe let no people out again, so that he could not return home.

MRS. FULTON. It may be that he could not return, but methinks 'tis more likely that his daughters held him than General Howe. The ladies are no patriots, you know. (*Drum and fife.*)

PORTER. Would they had taken pattern by Madam Fulton.

MRS. FULTON. Another company of minutemen eating up the road before them. They pause.

VOICE OF MINUTEMAN RUNNING IN. Which way to the fighting?

PORTER. The high street to Menotomy. Whence come you?

MINUTEMAN. Danvers. Forward!

MRS. FULTON. Not a second's pause (*claps hands*)! Saw ye ever eyes like theirs? Boys, most of them, just boys! A cold thrill runs through me even in this summerlike heat. Enough of this. We women must do our part. And here comes the man who will direct us. (*Enter Dr. Tufts.*)

TUFTS. Truly the whole countryside is up. Danvers men already. I trow that never men came thence at such a pace before. Minutemen. Minutemen.

PORTER. Have you more news, good doctor?

TUFTS. I met a man but now who said that reinforcements for the British troops had marched toward Lexington, and that the first force was marching from Concord and the farmers were fighting all along the road.

PORTER. Gage doubtless sent reinforcements as the rumor ran. Think you our men can face the cannon and musketry of the king's trained troops?

MRS. FULTON. Were I a man I'd fight.

ABIGAIL. And I.

TUFTS. They can and will. And you know, good sir, they need not stand before the cannon's mouth. New England soldiers have learned much of old from the Indians.

PORTER. What would poor Colonel Royall think of this?

TUFTS. Would he were here. His heart has been ever with us, and he could not but take fire had he seen the faces of those men of Danvers. Heat, exhaustion, hunger, thirst—forgotten in that determination to stand for their liberty.

ABIGAIL. You should have seen father and our minutemen as they started forth in the morning, with old Master Putnam and William Polly, who's hardly older than I am, following right along with the best of them.

MRS. FULTON. Old and young, we are all on fire with zeal, doctor. Tell us what we must do now if these game men of ours or Danvers come wounded back.

TUFTS. Gather the women and scrape lint for wounds, and have collected any good clean cloth for bandages.

MRS. FULTON. I'll do so now at my home beyond the bridge. Abigail, go you and tell your mother and collect the women. (*Exit Mrs. Fulton and Abigail.*)

(*A pause. Old Hall puffs nervously on his pipe. Porter gets a gun and begins to clean it. Distant sounds of guns and of fife and drum drawing nearer.*)

HALL. The moments drag in our suspense.

PORTER. We count them with the sound of guns.

(*Enter Abigail, running, and out of breath. Characters gather about her.*)

ABIGAIL. O Great-uncle Stephen, a man just stopped at our house! He came from — Concord — on horseback. He'd ridden — all along the way — and his powder and bullets were all gone — so he came home — and

HALL. Take breath, lass, yet quickly as thou canst.

ABIGAIL. And he says that houses are burning in Menotomy—the British soldiers fired them—and the king's troops are on the run—their tongues just hanging out of their mouths like dogs. (*Sounds of fife and drum.*)

PORTER. More minutemen. (*Enter two or three minutemen, running.*)

MINUTEMAN. Which way to the fighting?

PORTER. They are fighting even now in Menotomy. You had best take the main road to Charlestown. You'll catch them at Winter hill assuredly. Whence come ye?

MINUTEMAN. Salem.

TUFTS. Danvers and Lynn have passed already. Ye are late.

MINUTEMAN. All has gone wrong with us. Mistake upon mistake. I fear we'll be too late for any fight at all.

TUFTS. If ye go to Winter hill I think you'll cut them off there. I'll march alongside. (*Exeunt all but Porter.*) (*Fife and drum.*)

PORTER (*to his sign*). Royal Oak. Royal Oak no more. No Colonel-Royall, no King Royal. Fare ye well, Royal Oak. I'll paint ye over to-morrow and call ye — shall it be the Minuteman's Tavern or Liberty Oak? No, it shall be just Porter's Tavern. I can stand it no longer. Look out for yourself, Royal Oak. Farewell. (*Exits with musket.*)

## THE ROADSIDE FARM.

BY E. G. BIGELOW AND A. GLEASON.

*Time — 5.00 P.M., April 19, 1775.*

*Exterior of Rev. Edward Brooks' home on Grove Street, showing house. Under tree a fire with kettle on tripod, table with pewter mugs, bread, etc., chair, settle at front door. A gawky soldier lad sits at table, feeding hugely, Mercy in attendance. Nancy and Mrs. Putnam at gate.*

### CHARACTERS.

NANCY. Aged eighteen }  
MERCY. Aged twelve } Nieces of Abigail and Edward Brooks.

MRS. PUTNAM. A neighbor. (Husband was killed at Lexington.)

ABIGAIL BROOKS.

REV. EDWARD BROOKS. Her husband.

LIEUTENANT GOULD. Of the "King's Own."

TWO FARMER LADS.

MRS. PUTNAM. Good day, Mistress Nancy. Tell your aunt I must e'en go home to make ready the supper, it grows late.

NANCY. Of a surety, Mrs. Putnam, and thank you vastly for your assistance. 'T has been a busy day indeed, and sorely troubled would Aunt Abigail have been to do without your help — you and the other good neighbors.

MRS. PUTNAM. Sartin sure! Never in all my born days did I expect to see so many men-folks to onct.

NANCY. And such monstrous hungry ones, too! 'Twas fortunate indeed that kind Aunt Abigail had treasured that chocolate for all these years. Naught could be too good for our brave patriots.

MRS. PUTNAM. Poor fellows! Sorry I can't stay to help ye red up the clutter, but husband, he oughter be gittin' back 'most any minute now. Started off stroke o' noon, he did, an' my nice biled dinner jest dished up, ready on th' table! Men is sartingly set, once they take a notion, Miss Nancy, an' *he'd* took a notion they's goin' to be *fightin'* today! Sez I "'Taint nothin' but another o' them false alarms, an' if you let my nice dumplin's get all sogged up for th' want of eatin' you won't get no more in a hurry," sez I. "I'm goin' t' eat powder 'n balls fer my dinner today, or else give them some," sez he, jest like that, and gave me a strange look, an' off he legged it, carryin' th' ole flintlock he'd used in the Cannedy campaign. Sixty-three year old if a day, an' yet he must be mixin' in! We're all strong for libbity, Mistress Nancy, you an' your folks an' me an' my folks.

NANCY. Yes, Mrs. Putnam, we're all High Liberty Men together, come what may.

MRS. PUTNAM (*really going*). Th' ain't no one more willin' to give fer the cause 'n what I be, but when it comes to *wastin'* extry good dumplin's— an' anybuddy knows they don't reheate nohow — (*Her last words heard off stage after her exit. Nancy comes to table.*)

NANCY (*with a disapproving glance*). Indeed, my lad, 'twould be rude to hurry you, but —

LAD. Yes, ma'am, I know I'd orter be movin' long, but this yere choc'late sartingly do warm up the gizzard! Never tasted none before. Must be scurse!

MERCY. Didn't I tell you so, forsooth?

NANCY. Naught can be too good for those who hurry to their country's call today.

LAD. That's so, ma'am, an' I'd orter be hurryin' too. (*Rises, grasping his gun.*) Come on, ole bullet-eater. This here ole piece o' mine, marm, she's been in the Cannedy campaign — twenty year ago it wor, 'fore ever I wuz born. Dad carried 'er, an' he said she wor the prime kicker in th' hull reg'ment. Said she'd knock a man clean down quicker 'n ere a baulky mule could. Fact! Nary man in th' hull reg'ment could handle 'er but th' ole sir. (*Sits himself.*)

MERCY (*politely*). And belike you can shoot it as well as your sire?

LAD. Wall, ye see it's this way, young miss, th' ole gun would work's good's ever she did if she only hadn't lost 'er hammer. Gol durn it! I *had* one *promised*, a surenuff dandy, off one o' the reg'lars to Boston town. But wha' do ye 'spose I seen when I went to fetch it?

MERCY. Prithree, what?

LAD. Seed a young lad a-ridin' on a *rail* — tar 'n feathers, I did! Sed he'd been caught buying a gun off th' red coats. An' so, by lickory, I made meself scurse! (*Gloomily.*) But how th' nation can we git 'um? An' we're 'bleeged by law to have 'um. We are!

MERCY. Will it go off without a hammer?

LAD. Wall, no — 't won't *go off* exactly, but 't might *scare* a redcoat. Well, ladies, my respex to ye. I'll e'en hurry along. (*Lounges out.*)

NANCY. Every other man in the province, I warrant, is already there. He must be the last.

MERCY. The last and the laziest. And now, belike, our task is ended. (*Sinks upon settle.*)

NANCY. What a day! 'Tis the first time I've sat down since cock-crow.

MERCY. Came the messenger at cock-crow, Nancy? Alack, I fear me I was still asleep!

NANCY. *Cock-crow?* 'Twas not so very long after the stroke of midnight. I heard the thud of galloping hoofs, dogs barking at Cousin Caleb's, then all the men of the family rushing up and down the road. Didn't you hear that?

MERCY. Oh, Gemini! I must have slept right through it all. First I knew, Aunt Abigail was out in the road calling to us to come over and help with the chocolate.

NANCY. Oh, fie, simpleton! That was hours later. Didn't you hear father and Uncle Edward waking the boys? Didn't you hear old Pompey catching Dolly and Whiteface out in the pasture? Nor father riding for dear life up the road to Symmes corner to spread the alarm and join the Reading company?

MERCY. Not a sound did I hear! Oh, tell on, tell on! What happened then?

NANCY. And then, in the pale light just before dawning, came minute-men, streaming along the high road toward Menotomy—little bands of them all running, squads a-marching, all breathless with haste and excitement.

MERCY. And then, and then?

NANCY. Then, later, the men from *miles* away, hurrying, hurrying—for hours they'd had no food but still they hurried on! And trailing them, more weary still, came little groups of two or three together—

MERCY. And then Aunt Abigail bethought her of the chocolate.

NANCY. The chocolate, and us to serve the hungry ones. And here we be, still faithful to our duty.

MERCY. Good sooth, it has been stirring! The most exciting day of all my life. I do *adore* minutemen!

NANCY. But in such odd array? Shirt-sleeves, no uniforms, panting, unshorn, no hats, hair flying in the wind?

MERCY. Did Uncle Edward look like that when he set forth this morning?

NANCY. Nay, nay! In truth he looked the gentleman he is, an' 'twere he went to meeting, except for the musket slung across his shoulder. He rode our own gray mare, had on his *very best* full-bottomed wig, if you'll believe it, the one he wears whene'er he fills the pulpit for good old Parson Turrell in the new church. He galloped off like mad, trying to overtake Cousin Caleb and the Medford minutemen.

*(Abigail appears in the doorway.)*

ABIGAIL. Plenty of chocolate still in the pot, girls?

NANCY. Not very much, though we have thinned it out with milk. That last leisurely lad was naught but a bottomless pit.

MERCY. And now, Aunt Abigail, the excitement's all over.

ABIGAIL. You know they may be coming home—'most any minute now—tired and hungry.

NANCY. And our supplies near gone!

ABIGAIL. We *must* have more.

MERCY. Shall I run over home? Perchance mother can spare us yet another loaf from yesterday's baking.

ABIGAIL. Yes, child, run. And if there be a horse still left, have Pomp



fetch us more bread — or crackers — from Master Ebenezer Hall's bakery — if so be they *have* baked on this distressful day. (*Exit Mercy.*)

NANCY. Now to coax up our fire — scarce *any* wood left. Can't Peter —

ABIGAIL. Where under the canopy *is* Peter?

NANCY. He's gone away up through the trap door, into the upper attic. He thinks he can see our road where it curves into Menotomy.

ABIGAIL. Nonsense! He can't possibly see beyond the Weirs.

NANCY. Peter's pretty good at seeing, Aunt Abigail. (*Steps out and calls up to Peter.*) Oh, Peter! Can you see aught yet? What can you see!

PETER'S VOICE FROM ABOVE. Oh, I can see *everything*! Lucky the leaves aren't out yet! (*Mercy entering drops leaves in a hurry.*)

MERCY. O, Peter, *what* can you see?

PETER. I see the road, *way* beyond the river. And, way beyond that I'm almost sure I see smoke. Oh, such lots of smoke, there must be a big fire! Not so very far off. I hear something — guns and guns.

MERCY. Hush, listen! I believe I can hear it too. (*Hops up and down excitedly as distant cannon become unmistakable.*)

PETER. O, mother, was that cannon? I begin to feel afraid. And the musket shots sound nearer and ever nearer. They *must* be coming this way! O, mother, what if they really should?

ABIGAIL. Nonsense, Peter! Look again. Look near the bridge and see if you can't see your father coming. (*Alarmed, in spite of herself.*)

PETER. I see *something* — something bright, shining in the sun — *way* over in Menotomy. O, mother, it must be the regulars!

NANCY. He's in the fight, Aunt Abigail!

ABIGAIL. He's a minister of the gospel, child, he never would be in the fight.

NANCY. But he carried his musket. (*More shots and cannon.*)

MERCY. Well, somebody 's in the fight, anyway, just hear how they rattle! O, Peter, can't you *see* anything more?

PETER. That big one, that makes me feel afraid, surely *is* a cannon — must be a real battle. Oh! I *see* someone — he was hidden before — just crossing the bridge, coming this way.

ABIGAIL. O, Peter, who is it?

NANCY. Who is it?

MERCY. Who is it, Peter?

} (*In unison.*)

PETER. Only a boy, with a gun, crawling along slowly.

ABIGAIL. Don't let him pass by. Run, girls, out to the road and bring him in. He surely must have news. (*Girls run out. Faint suggestion of a drum and fife. Abigail cuts bread, etc. — pause.*)

ABIGAIL. Look again now, Peter, are you quite sure you can't see your father anywhere?

PETER. No, mother, but oh! *don't* you hear the drums and fifes of the redcoats now? And the sun on their bayonets seems almost like flashes of lightning! I am not afraid any more. Oh, I *wish* I was there!

GIRLS' VOICES OUTSIDE. O, Aunt Abigail, he's *seen* the fighting! It's going on now. (*They enter, carrying the boy's knapsack and talking eagerly to him. Boy limps.*)

BOY, to ABIGAIL. Yes, marm, and they're on the run, thank God!

ABIGAIL (*incredulous*). Not the grenadiers?

BOY. Yes, the grenadiers—all the way from Concord bridge—running like hares.

ABIGAIL. Pray heaven no one has been hurt!

BOY. *Hurt!* They say eight of our men were *killed* in Lexington and more in Concord, and hundreds and hundreds of the king's troops, so they say. I only *hope* it's true.

ABIGAIL. You say they are retreating? Not coming down our road to Medford?

BOY (*taking off his boot*). No, making for Boston town as fast as e'er God lets them, our men hot on their tracks and taking pot shots from any cover they can get. Swarming in on their rear guard—mess of *human hornets!* (*Gesticulating with his boot in hand.*) The whole country-side's roused. No, marm, they wouldn't add a mile to *that journey!* (*Takes food offered by the girls.*) Not even to make a call on these here hospitable young ladies, they wouldn't.

MERCY. Do have more hot chocolate. It's really milk now, and not so *very* hot.

BOY (*his mouth full*). It's the very best vittles that ever I et. First I've seen since sun-up. When I was doin' my chores the alarm bells rung. I followed the Danvers minutemen.

NANCY. You've walked all the way from Danvers town?

BOY. Well, I walked when I didn't run. If 'twarnt for these shoes so tarnation small I could run yit. I'd ought to, too, Cap'n (*adjusts shoe*) give me a message to deliver. (*He hobbles.*) Git there sometime, I s'pose. Haf to be going. (*Starts.*)

ABIGAIL. One moment, my lad. Have you by any fortunate chance seen or heard aught of the Reverend Edward Brooks, my husband, this woeful day?

BOY. Really—don't know him, but more'n likely he's escaped safe enough. Wal, there, marm (*a thought strikes him*), seems like I *did* hear as how a spent bullet 'd hit some very *ancient like* ole gen'leman over this way—

ABIGAIL. He's not an *elderly* man.

BOY. What's he look like?

ABIGAIL. Tall and dignified, clerical dress, full-bottomed wig, rode a gray mare.

BOY. Oh, him! Why, marm, he's a good un! Right in the thick o' things over to Menotomy. He's all right!

ABIGAIL. Heaven be praised! He's still alive, then. Would he were safe at home again! (*The boy goes out. The girls look up towards Peter.*)

NANCY. What now, Peter?

PETER. Oh, the guns are well-nigh silent, I fear the fight is over. Hold! Horsemen—three, four, and men on foot. A gray horse—*looks* like Dolly.

ABIGAIL. It must be your father, at last!

PETER. No, a rider in a red coat—*bright* red, like the king's troops.

ABIGAIL. What *does* it mean?

PETER. Oh, I *do* see father! He's walking, and leading Dolly—they're almost here!

DISTANT MEN'S VOICES (*getting nearer, singing*).

“Yankee Doodle came to town,  
Riding on a pony”—

NANCY. Seem to be in good spirits!

VOICES. "Heels they stuck way out behind  
Legs were long and bony—ee—ee."

(*Sounds of horse's feet and cheers.*)

VOICE. Don't sing any more about heels, fellers, might hurt the poor gentleman's feelings.

ANOTHER. Haw, haw! Yes, that's so! Heels seems to be his'n's tender p'nt! (*Guffaws.*)

REV. EDWARD (*outside*). Thank you for your assistance, neighbors. Without it, assuredly, our friend's life would have been sacrificed. Take the mare, Pomp, and give her a good rubbing down. And now, Leftenant—

VOICES. Three cheers for Parson! Hurray! Hurray! Hurray! Goodby!

ABIGAIL. Thanks be to Providence! (*They enter. The lieutenant, with his foot done up in huge white wrappings, is leaning heavily on Mr. Brooks' shoulder.*)

ABIGAIL. My dear husband! You are safe!

REV. EDWARD. Yes, wife, and I have brought you a guest, Leftenant Gould of the King's Own. My nieces, Leftenant.

LT. GOULD (*with a ceremonious bow*). Your servant, madam—ladies. (*All three courtesy.*)

ABIGAIL. But you are wounded! (*They assist him into the chair. Nancy takes charge.*)

NANCY. Quick, Mercy, child! A pillow for his head, he faints! Perchance a footstool will ease his wound!

MERCY (*running into house*). Isn't he just too beau-u-tiful!

ABIGAIL (*to Edward*). What is the meaning of this? A British officer?

REV. EDWARD. Shot in the heel at Concord bridge. The Lord has delivered our enemy into our hands this day, and we must be merciful unto him.

NANCY (*to the lieutenant*). Oh, sir! (*She puts one arm around his drooping neck. Re-enter Mercy, who adjusts footstool.*)

ABIGAIL (*to Edward*). Tell me, what hath chanced?

REV. EDWARD. Patriots have been killed at Lexington and Concord, how many I know not, but the whole country is roused. Even now they are pursuing the British back to Boston and inflicting terrible slaughter. Only the arrival of Earl Percy with re-enforcements has saved them from total annihilation. That which we have so dreadfully expected has come to pass.

ABIGAIL. War?

REV. EDWARD. Yes, wife, and we must be ready to give our all in the cause of liberty.

LT. GOULD (*rousing with a shudder*). Mr. Brooks, this is a most fateful day! Is it possible that your people understand what they do in resisting the lawful authority of their king, and attacking in armed force his troops? It is mutiny, insurrection, rebellion, and must be punished as such, and my heart bleeds for your people.

REV. EDWARD. The outcome of today, Leftenant Gould, is in the hand of God, and only our grandchildren to the tenth generation may know whether this day's deeds be good—or ill.

## AN AFTERWORD.

Weather conditions were propitious, and the response to the Society's invitation was a crowded hall at the Women's Clubhouse. The scenic artist had reproduced the old market-place and town pump. The old bakery, distillery and Sprague house were realistic in the distance. The scenes of that April morning of '75 were vividly brought to view, as in the preceding pages.

Later the Roadside Farm at the West End was shown as never before since the original Patriot's Day. Especially real seemed the return of Rev. Edward Brooks with the captured officer of the "King's Own" whose words showed him a loyal subject, and those of his captor a "high son of liberty."

The tableaux, songs and stately dances gave added interest to the well-planned, written and executed representation of Medford's entrance into the Revolution. The thanks of the Society and the responsive public are due to each and all of the authors and participants.

---

AFTERWARDS.

Medford square was thronged with citizens and children for the observance of Patriot's Day. Just a few of the old veterans of '61 are left to us now, but they were loyally present, guests of our president in the old home of Capt. Isaac Hall. The usual features of the day were increasingly well observed and the modern rider sped on his way.

Memorial Day came, the day of days for the "comrades" of the Grand Army. They number but eleven now. Eight of them, Commander George L. Stokell, Charles O. Burbank, Edgar Hall, Alvin Reed, Winslow Joyce, Thomas Kelley, G. H. LesDnier, followed the old flag to the silent city to mark their comrades' graves. A visiting comrade from Vermont, J. M. Safford, went with them. We grasped their hands and looked into their

faces once more, remembering the long-ago time in which they lived, loyally dared and bravely fought.

On Flag Day four of them participated in the public exercises. "The Old Guard dies, but it never surrenders."

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### A TIMELY ACCESSION.

A most recent addition to our Society's collection is a centenary medal (in bronze) just issued by the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, a memorial of its hundredth year.

Its obverse depicts a *National Limited* train drawn by one of the largest modern passenger locomotives, with the spirit of transportation guiding its flight. The sculptor shows the spirit, not with angelic wings and filmy drapery, but as a rugged human, flying with outstretched right hand reaching over and beyond and pointing the way ahead. The bordering legend is "One Hundred Years—Safety, Strength, Speed." The reverse border is "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 1827-1927," and in marked contrast shows Peter Cooper's "Tom Thumb," the first steam locomotive built in America.

The "Tom Thumb" presents no greater contrast than did the first used on the Boston and Lowell, which made its initial journey to Boston on June 24, 1835. Our frontispiece presents the models of the engine imported from England, a passenger car, a "burthen car," construction and hand-car, also a snow-plow. Waterman Brown of Woburn, an earlier employee on the road, made this most instructive exhibit, which is now in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston. Mr. Brown lost an arm by accident on the road at West Medford, and was ever after kept in the company's service. He was fireman on one of the early locomotives, which was trying to beat an earlier record of nearly a mile a minute, when it overtook a stalled freight train in the cut above Grove street.



To see the steel monsters of today, go up to the High and Canal street grade crossings,—“*stop, look, listen,*” when the Canadian Pacific and Pullmans speed by. Stand safely away, and remember that when the road was chartered it was expected that people might operate their own vehicles on it by horse power.

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#### A LAST WORD.

In an article relative to the building of the Boston and Lowell railroad was this quotation from Dr. Darwin's poem —

Or, on wide waving wing expanded, bear  
The flying chariot through the fields of air.

The reader said (April 20, 1908), “The realization of these I willingly leave to people of the future. Terra firma is good enough for me. There *are* possibilities in air-ships and submarine boats, however. Perhaps the Historical Society fifty years (or less) hence may consider them.” See REGISTER, July, 1909. On the day of the REGISTER's publication the daily press told of Louis Bleriot's flight across the English channel.

But eighteen of the fifty years have flown by and the young American, Lindbergh, has, in his “flying chariot,” *Spirit of St. Louis*, traversed the thirty-six hundred miles of “fields of air” in less than a day and a half. It took a week for the great cruiser *Memphis* to bring him home. But otherwise in the realm of science and research things have moved fast. Dr. Darwin, in all his prophetic fancy, would not have dared to predict that throughout this entire country the American people would *hear* the voice of our president as he welcomed the young aviator, “dowered with his mother's modesty and charm, and unspoiled,” home again. With the thrill of these recent events still in mind, shall we not say, as did Professor Morse, “What hath God wrought!”



RAILWAY ARCH OVER THE MYSTIC

By courtesy of the City Engineer we were allowed to copy the excellent photograph preserved in his office. The earliest railroad bridge there was of wood and repeatedly took fire.

This (the second) is of dark Medford granite and was built in the early 1840s by Asa Sheldon, the "Wilmington farmer." It is at right angles with the railroad tracks and as people said then, "built to last forever." The view was taken looking down stream, perhaps in 1880.

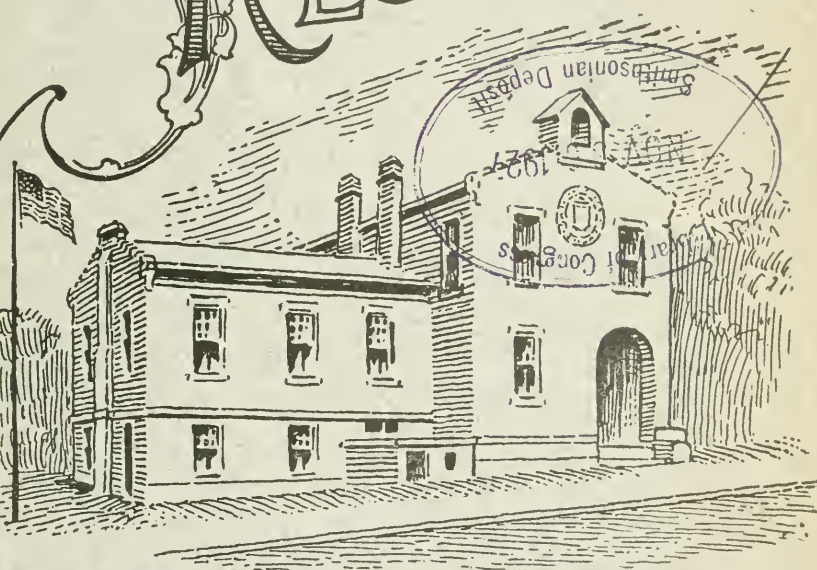
In July, 1906, the Parkway was built with its nearby arch beneath the railway and the tracks raised four feet. At that time the present visible arch of concrete was built. Its span is two feet less than that of this granite bridge. "There is nothing lost when you know where it is." This old arch is still there, though unseen, a backbone of granite in the newer structure, with a concrete soffit and retaining wall, twelve feet wider on either side and four feet higher. The two extra tracks then projected have not yet materialized and the two former still carry the immense traffic of today.



Vol. XXX.]

[No. 3.]

# HISTORICAL REGISTER



September, 1927

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

F.H.S.

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

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Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

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## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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Advertising Manager, Miss E. R. ORNE.

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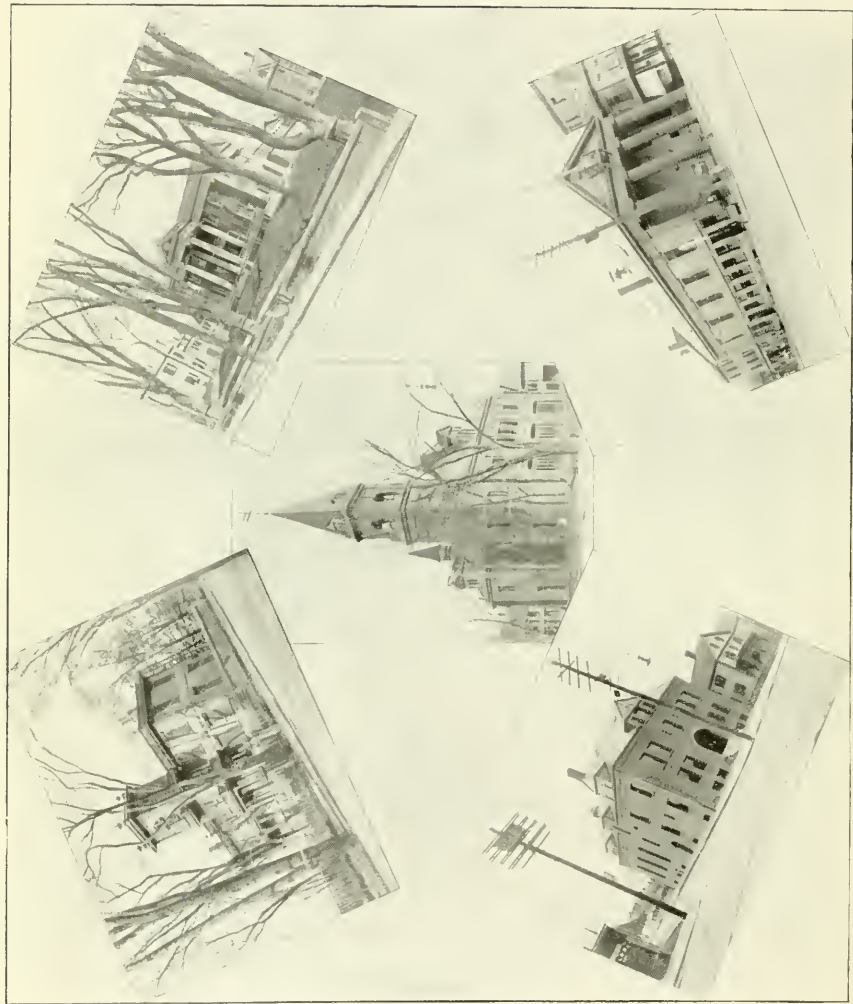
### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_







GROUP OF MEDFORD BUILDINGS

RESIDENCE, THATCHER MAGOUN, 2d  
POLICE STATION

NEW JERSEY, MEDFORD, N. J.

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CITY OF MEDFORD, N. J.

# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXX.

SEPTEMBER, 1927.

NO. 3.

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## A NEW SHIP, A NEW COLONY, AND A NEW CHURCH.

A STUDY IN GENEALOGY AND ALSO ONE IN HISTORY.

SEVERAL years ago there came under our observation a collection of letters received by a relative and long carefully preserved by him, which led to a protracted genealogical research. They numbered a hundred and fifty or more, and all but one were intact. That one was written, evidently, on two sheets of note paper, the text of its numbered pages, 5, 6, and 7 proving the fact.

We quote from its page 5: —

He sailed Jan. 1826, with Mr Sessions, agent of Colonization Soc., Mr. Force a printer, and a large number of colonists in the ship *Vine*, arriving at Liberia in thirty-four days. He died July 23, 1826, of climatic fever.

At once this query arose, "To whom did the pronoun *he* refer?" And the lack of the preceding but missing pages with the date and place of writing became more and more evident. It was written in a clear and excellent hand, and before closing "with assurance of regard," the writer said: —

It is a source of regret, that the descendants, by the male line, of my grandfather Nathan now number no more than *six*. I presume those of William and Lemuel [his brothers] are many times that number.

As the writer, Charles C. Holton, mentioned his grandfather Nathan, we began our search along the genealogical line, which took us backward to one William Holton, who came over from England in the ship *Francis* to Charlestown in 1634, and was among the company that migrated from New-towne (*i.e.*, Cambridge) and settled another

New-towne on the Connecticut river, later and now called Hartford. That he did so, going over the Indian trail, later known as the Bay path, shows his pioneering spirit, and furthermore that he was of the earliest settlers of Northampton and one of the "honored committee" to begin at Northfield gives additional interest. In the fifth generation of Holtons we find that "grandfather Nathan" Holton was born in Northfield in 1753. He was the youngest of his father's family of six daughters and three sons, whose home was on the slope of "Grass hill," where is now the Mount Hermon school. There, also, King Philip made his last stand against the settlers, a century before.

The genealogy in History of Northfield mentions Nathan, but tells of his removal in 1800 to Vermont. How much we wished for the missing pages of that letter! But we took up another clue, that of the "colonists" it mentioned. After a long search we found, in the Massachusetts State Library, reports of the American Colonization Society.

That society was organized in 1816 for the purpose of transporting free and manumitted negroes to Africa, and in 1819 Congress appropriated \$100,000 in aid of its work. Henry Clay was a long while its president and Francis Scott Key its vice-president, and its first colonists were sent in 1820. The colony was recognized as an independent republic in 1847, and in 1848 by England and other nations.

From its reports we learn of auxiliary societies in the various states, both north and south, and from these we quote an extract reproduced from the *Norfolk (Va.) Beacon* of February 26, 1826: —

Ship *Indian Chief*, Capt. Cochran, sailed from this port, Wednesday last 15th, for the Society's settlement at Cape Mesuarado.

with this significant editorial comment: —

Our community is indeed too small to favor that sort of benevolent excitement which was displayed in Boston, on the sailing of the

*Vine*, nor would it be altogether wise to make any public parade of our feelings in our southern cities.

On page 32 of report of 1826 we found the following:—

The brig *Vine* with 34 emigrants, a missionary and a printer accompanied by Rev. Horace Sessions, an agent of the Society, who proposed to return in the same vessel, and also the *Indian Chief* from Norfolk with a much larger company. . . . The first sailed from Boston on the fourth of January and arrived at Liberia on the second of February, the other left Norfolk February 15, arrived March 22. Eighteen of the emigrants in the *Vine* were just before their departure at their own request organized into a church and the impressive exercises of the occasion were attended with heartfelt interest.

On reading the above we noticed a similarity of circumstances (though two centuries separated) of two ships crossing the stormy Atlantic—the *Mayflower*, bringing its Pilgrim church from England to the Indian wilds of Massachusetts, and the *Vine*, carrying an organized church “of free people of colour” back to the soil of Africa, whence years before its forbears were taken and sold into bondage. Next, our curiosity was aroused as to the vessel called *Vine*, and if she was a Medford ship. The courteous customs officers furnished us her registration as of

Boston and Charlestown, June 24, 1825.

Tobias Lord of Boston in State of Massachusetts having taken or subscribed the oath required and having sworn that he is the only owner of the ship or vessel called the *Vine* of Boston, whereof Barnabas Mann is at present Master, and a citizen of the United States as he hath sworn, and that the said ship or vessel was built at Kennebunk in the State of Maine in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-five as appears by Register No. 11, issued at Kennebunk June 18, 1825, now cancelled, property the same. And Benjamin Stone, appointed for the purpose, having certified that the said ship or vessel has one deck and two masts and that her length is 85 ft. 2 in. her breadth 23 ft. 8½ in. her depth 9 feet. 7½ in., and that she measures one hundred and seventy and ¾ tons, that she is a Brig, has a square stern, no galleries, and a billet head. And the said Tobias Lord, having agreed to this description and admeasurement above specified and sufficient security having been given, the said Brig has been duly registered at the Port of Boston and Charlestown.



The above bore the "Permanent No. 126, one hundred & twenty-six," and marginal endorsement "Transferred by enrolt, 255, 4 Nov. 1825."

We find in the *Columbian Centinel* that the *Vine*, Grozier, master, cleared for Pernambuco and Africa. Her new owners were Ropes, Read & Co. In the foregoing we have more definite information than of the *Mayflower*.

Now about the migrating church's institution. We find in the *Recorder and Telegraph* (Congregational paper, Boston) of December 23, 1825 (notice this is near Forefathers' day), the following:—

#### EMIGRANT CHURCH ORGANIZED.

Last Wednesday evening, in Park street meetinghouse, a church consisting of persons of colour about to sail for Liberia, was publicly received into the fellowship of other churches. An Ecclesiastical Council having been held at a previous hour consisting of Rev. Dr. Jenks [moderator], Rev. Sereno E. Dwight and Bro. Samuel Train,\* Park Street, Rev. Ebenezer Rogers and Dea. Samuel Fales, First Church, Dedham, Rev. Justin Edwards and Dea. Mark Brown, South Church, Andover, Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner and Dea. William Phillips, Old South Church, Rev. Samuel Green and Bro. John Tappan, Union Church, who after hearing and approving the articles of faith and covenant which had been adopted by the persons desirous of being embodied in the church, proceeded to organize such of them as were presented with certificates of dismission and recommendation, into a distinct body. Their names are as follows:

John Selmar Nubia	Phillis Fitch
Newport Gardner	Harriet Moett
Robert Wainwood	Diana Harris
Eusebia Wainwood	Mary Anna

Five others though not provided with letters furnished satisfactory evidence to the Council that they were members in good standing in the Church of Christ and were cordially received into communion by the new church. Their names were John Chavers, Mary Chavers, William Thomas, Andrew Harris, Corta DeWolfe. Rev. Mr. Wisner, Scribe, read the proceedings of the Council. Prayer was by Dr. Jenks, and sermon by Rev. S. E. Dwight, from Psalms 68: 31.

\* Samuel Train, in 1827, moved to Medford and here became a well-known citizen, living in the second house west from the First Parish or Unitarian church. See REGISTER. Vol. II, p. 67; Vol. XVIII, p. 89.

*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* It having been reported to the Council that the infant church had made unanimous choice of Newport Gardner and John Selmar Nubia as deacons, the fellowship of the church was expressed to them by Rev. Mr. Edwards and the closing prayer by Rev. Mr. Green. An anthem arranged by Deacon Gardner was then sung.

The *Christian Watchman* of December 30 (Baptist weekly) gives the same account, with this addition, —

A Congregational Church and all the exercises were appropriate and highly interesting to a crowded audience. Collection, \$188.27.

The thirteen individuals above mentioned, with about thirty other colored people, also Rev. Calvin Holton, a Baptist missionary, and Dr. Ebenezer Hunt are expected to sail from this port on Monday next in the brig *Vine*, belonging to Ropes, Read & Co., to join the colony in Liberia. Rev. Mr. Sessions, the agent, will accompany the expedition and return in the same vessel.

In the *Watchman* of the same date appears a card of thanks of these colonists for the courteous and generous treatment by the Boston people. This was signed by Dea. Newport Gardner. What this treatment was will be seen in the society's report of 1826: —

At the "monthly concert" the subject was broached of their need of a printing plant, and a generous friend supplied a press and a font of type, and nearly \$600 was raised to provide other supplies, and committee appointed to at once procure them. Three extra fonts of type, ink, paper and office fixtures to start a newspaper.

Two sets of patent scales, two of blacksmith's tools, nails, two globes and a bell for the academy, besides Bibles and Testaments from the American Bible Society, books and clothing are enumerated. . . . The *Vine* sailed on Monday afternoon with a fine breeze.

And here at last we have found an answer to our query as to whom the pronoun *he* in the fragmentary letter we quoted from referred. It was Rev. Calvin Holton, the Baptist missionary who sailed in the *Vine*. The vital records of Gill, Mass., mention his birth thus: HOLTON.

Calvin, son of Nathan and Hannah, b. Mar. 16, 1797.

As Gill was incorporated in 1795 and Nathan Holton removed in 1900, there is no other mention of the family.

Of his boyhood, education and young life we have as yet found nothing, until the following in the *Watchman* of December 2, 1825:—

At Rev. Dr. Abbott's meetinghouse in Beverly, Mr. Calvin Holton was ordained an evangelist; charge of fellowship by Rev. Mr. Nelson of Lynn. He is destined for the American settlement at Liberia.

On March 8, 1826, Captain Grozier of the *Vine* wrote from Pernambuco to Ropes, Read & Co.:—

I had thirty-four days passage to Liberia, where *I landed all my passengers in good health*. They were received as brothers and sisters by the other settlers. They were much pleased with the place. It is a delightful place.

I was detained ten days, the Governor being absent on my arrival. I left there on Feb. 18, with Mr. Sessions on board in pretty good health and spirits, but he was taken sick shortly after leaving the land and departed this life on the 4th day of March 50 miles south of the line. I arrived at this port on the 14th of March.—*Recorder and Telegraph*, May 5, 1826.

We read of the rigor of the pilgrims' first winter and its mortality, the taking off of half their number. This letter of the *Vine's* captain is the beginning of bad news from the African colony. On June 9 the *Watchman* said:

We are sorry to state that Mr. Force, late of Boston, after publishing a few succeeding weeks of the [Liberia] *Herald*, has deceased. Mr. Sessions is also dead. Dr. Peaco is sick, but Mr. Ashmun and the colonists generally are in good health.

The issue of June 16 contains a half column letter of Rev. Lott Cary, telling that "the expedition from Boston has suffered more loss than that from Norfolk, and expressed gratitude for the recovery of Rev. Mr. Holton, whose sickness had been alarming, but that he preached last Sunday and hoped to tomorrow," adding what gives a clue to his work: "I trust we shall be able to get along well. Bro. Holton will be in the public employ till his year is out in conducting the school in this place." [Monrovia.]

But in the issue of November 19 was a letter, dated Monrovia, August 9, 1826, following this editorial notice:

## DEATH OF REV. MR. HOLTON.

It was the prayer of this estimable man, who we had the pleasure of knowing, that he might be the instrument of directing the unenlightened Africans to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. No doubt his short labors had some salutary effect. But alas! he had only just commenced them, when he was suddenly called to his reward.

and quotes —

We are called to mourn an afflictive bereavement in the loss of Rev. Mr. Holton, whose promise of usefulness in the colony was flattering in a high degree, whose convalescence was at a time so advanced as to place him in our estimation quite out of danger. A relapse. . . . carried him off on Sunday, July 23, at 3 P.M. . . . A calmness, resignation and peace were never absent from his heart, quite to the moment of his transition.

We have, from the reading of that partial letter, traced something to add to a prospective genealogy, and have yet much to learn, of one of whom the Baptist librarian said, "A brief career; you will not find anything about him." He died a year and a century ago, but the spirit of service that led him into the work called others thither also.

It was a none too popular calling. As we think of it, remember the colonists were "free people of colour", going back to African soil to establish homes, a colony, eventually a nation, on this earth. Remember how Lydia Maria Francis' "appeal for those Americans called Africans" ostracized her here around Boston. Remember the scenes about the court house and down State street. Compare, if you will, the *Mayflower* of 1620 and its pilgrim colony, and try and picture the crew of the *Vine* with those white men, Sessions, Holton, and printer Force, with thirty-six dusky colonists, of whom was the regularly organized church, with the generous Boston outfit stowed *beneath* the "one deck" of the new and seaworthy brig *Vine*. Think of their thirty-four-day voyage across the Atlantic, which a year and a century later was to be crossed by *air line* in thirty-four hours. You may find some similarities, and yet *something more*, in this story of a hundred years ago.

[COPY.]

**THE MAYFLOWER OF THE PILGRIMS.**

Found among the papers of the Society's former Secretary, Eliza M. Gill.

The ship in which the Pilgrims, who settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, made the passage from Europe to America.

Rigged model: Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to 1 foot. England, 1620.

A wooden, carvel built, keel vessel, with full bluff bow, strongly raking below water line; raking curved stem; large open head; long, round, (nearly log shaped) bottom; tumble-in top side; short run; very large and high square stern; quarter galleries; high forecastle, square on forward end, with open rails on each side; open bulwarks to main and quarter decks; a succession of three quarter decks or poops, the after one being nearly 9 feet above the main deck; two boats stowed on deck; ship rigged with pole masts; without jibs; square spritsail (or watersail) under bowsprit; two square sails on foremast and mainmast, and lateen sail on mizzenmast.

Dimensions of Vessel. Length over all, knightheads to taffrail, 82 feet; beam, 22 feet; depth, 14 feet; tonnage, 120; bowsprit, outboard, 40 feet, 6 inches; spritsail yard, 14 feet, 6 inches; foremast, main deck to top, 39 feet; total length, main deck to truck, 67 feet, 6 inches; foreyard, 47 feet, 6 inches; fore topsail yard, 34 feet, 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  inches; mainmast, deck to top, 46 feet; total deck to truck, 81 feet; main yard, 53 feet; main topsail yard, 38 feet, 6 inches; mizzenmast, deck to top, 34 feet; total deck to truck, 60 feet, 6 inches; spanker yard, 54 feet, 6 inches; boats, one on port side of deck, 17 feet long by 5 feet, 2 inches wide; one on starboard side, 13 feet, 6 inches long by 4 feet, 9 inches wide.

This model was under the personal supervision of Capt. J. W. Collins. It is an exact miniature, in hull and rig, of a ship of the date and size of the *Mayflower*. Careful attention was given to its construction in all details; it was built from the lines and rigged from the sail plan of a ship contemporaneous with the *Mayflower*,



and, it may fairly be assumed, represents such a ship as brought the Pilgrims from Plymouth, England, to the New England coasts.

The Pilgrims' *Mayflower*, of 1620, was at one time an English warship. The name is one of the oldest ship names in the English navy, going back to 1415, when a vessel with that name carried some of the knights who fought in Agincourt across the channel. Her successor—the *Mayflower* of 1447—was the flagship of Richard, Duke of Gloucester. But the *Mayflower* of 1620 was an old *Armada* veteran long before she came across the Atlantic, and took a prominent part in that historic sea-fight in 1588, fighting alongside of Drake's *Revenge* and Hawkins' *Victory*. In the fight off Gravelines, when the *Armada* made a last desperate attempt to save itself from utter rout, the *Mayflower's* part was a prominent one. According to a recent writer in the London *Graphic*, the ship was one of the chief ones contributed to Queen Elizabeth's fleet by the merchants of the city of London, but Goodwin's *Pilgrim Republic* states that the officials of Lynnes offered the *Mayflower* (150 tons) to join the fleet against the dreaded *Armada*. The *Graphic* erroneously implies that the *Mayflower* ended her days ingloriously in the slave trade between Guinea and America. Goodwin, in reference to this rumor, says that the slaver *Mayflower* was a ship of 350 tons, while the Pilgrim vessel was only 150. The latter came to Salem in 1629, and the last known of her was when she was one of a fleet that landed John Winthrop and his colonists in Charlestown in 1630.—*Boston Herald*.

The most authentic information fixes the tonnage of the *Mayflower* of the Pilgrims at 120 tons.

---

#### HENRY PUTNAM.

Anything relating to the life of a man like Henry Putnam, the soldier from Medford who was killed at the battle of Lexington, is always of historical interest.

Two articles have appeared in the REGISTER regarding him. In Vol. XXII, p. 77, "A Romance of Old Medford," and in Vol. XXIV, p. 31, "Henry Putnam of Medford."

He lived near Meeting House brook, but whether on the site of the present "Home for Aged Men and Women" or in the valley of the brook is not certainly known.

The following extracts concerning him are taken from "The Putnam Lineage," by Eben Putnam, published in 1907, p. 70.

Henry Putnam b. 14 Aug., 1712; bapt. Salem Village, 17 Aug., 1712; killed 19 Apr., 1775. Son of Eleazer and Elizabeth Rolph Putnam of Salem Village.

There is considerable difficulty in tracing the history of this family (Henry), as the father left Danvers and his son Henry seems to have remained there, causing some confusion in regard to localities; added to this are various contradictory statements received from descendants now scattered throughout the United States and who are limited somewhat in their knowledge by the tradition which variously states that Henry, senior, and Henry, junior, were killed at Lexington.

The whole life history of both father and son would undoubtedly prove interesting, as they seem to have had the same love of adventure, the reckless bravery and patriotism of General Israel Putnam, with whom they were allied by marriage as well as blood.

There is a romantic story concerning the courtship of Henry Putnam. It is related that on one of his journeys from Medford to Connecticut, he stopped over night at Bolton, fell in love with his host's daughter, proposed in the morning, was immediately married and with his bride drove back—her dowry consisting of two cows and twelve sheep.

He is said to have been at the capture of Louisburg, being in command of a company there; his son Henry was also there from Danvers.

In 1738, he united with his brother, Samuel Putnam of Topsfield, and their mother, Elizabeth, in a deed of sale of land in Danvers to Benjamin and Joseph Knight. In or about the year 1745, he sold his father's homestead to Phineas Putnam, but had not disposed of all his property in Danvers, as he was on tax list in 1752, and on the fourth of March of that year was one of the three

tellers at the first town meeting in Danvers to collect and count the votes for selectmen. At this meeting he was chosen surveyor of lumber. Probably about this time he removed to Charlestown, as the name of Henry Putnam does not occur on the Danvers tax list until 1757, when we may suppose it is the son and not the father who is mentioned.

Henry Putnam\* was taxed in Charlestown from 1756-1765 (he had purchased of J. Hartwell, forty-five acres in 1753), kept school without the neck. He was then styled "Gentleman," and, according to Wyman, from Danvers.†

On May 9, 1763, Henry Putnam of Charlestown, "Gentleman," was appointed administrator on the estate of his son John, late of Charlestown. It appears from extracts that he was more or less of a soldier, a scholar, and a man of some consequence, else he would not have had the title of gentleman. Some time, soon after 1763, he probably removed to Medford and was perhaps there when the alarm of the 19th of April was sent out and may have joined his old friends among the Danvers minute men. It is worthy of notice that the Danvers militia marched from Danvers to West Cambridge, a distance of over sixteen miles, in four hours. It was at West Cambridge that the greatest loss was met with by the Americans; it was at that point that the Danvers companies, hoping to intercept the retreating British, took possession of a small, walled enclosure and with shingles attempted to form a breastwork. There were nearly two hundred men from Danvers and Beverly. Henry Putnam, senior, of Medford, was killed, his son Henry badly wounded, Perley Putnam was killed, and his brother Nathan wounded, all but the first being

\* Middlesex Co. Registry, Vol. 57, p. 209, Apr., 1753. Deed Joseph Hartwell to Henry Putnam.

Middlesex Co. Registry, Vol. 62, p. 563, 9 May, 1765. Deed Henry Putnam to John Swan Senr.

† For proof of the identity of Henry of Charlestown see will of Nathaniel Boardman in Essex Probate.

members of the Danvers company. Another son of Henry, Eleazer, who went out with his company from Medford, was near or among the Danvers men. There Henry Putnam gave up his life for his country at the age of sixty-three years; he had volunteered his services, as he was exempt from military duty. I have seen it stated that five of his sons were there. His son Henry remained in Medford wounded, probably at the home of his brother Eleazer; but was at the battle of Bunker Hill.

Henry Putnam married Hannah Boardman.

#### CHILDREN:

HENRY, b. 1737 (by a curious error the record dates his birth as 1747), bapt. at the church in Salem Village, 2 Dec., 1753.

ELEAZER,\* b. 5 June, bapt. 13 Aug., 1738. Was in Capt. Isaac Hall's company, and received credit for five days' service on the Lexington alarm.

ELIJAH, b. 23, bapt. 26 July, 1741. Probably the Elijah who was graduated from Harvard College, 1766.

ROGER, b. 10, bapt. 16 Oct., 1743.

JOHN, b. 11 Oct., bapt. 13 Oct., 1745; administration on his estate granted to his father, with Caleb Brooks and Thomas Reed as bondsmen, 9 May, 1763. (According to the Perley Putnam MSS., this John had removed to St. John.

BILLINGS, b. 11 May, 1749.

BENJAMIN, b. 26 Aug., bapt. in Salem Village, 15 Sept., 1751, d. Savannah, Ga., 1801.

Henry Putnam's father, Eleazer Putnam, lived in Danvers. He settled on a farm north of the Gen. Israel Putnam house and near the Topsfield boundary on the present Preston place. He was a farmer and probably well off. Here Henry was born.

In 1690 Eleazer Putnam had been one of Capt. William Raymond's company, enlisted for the "Canada Expedition." The General Court thought so well of this command that in 1725 a grant of land was made to the

\* Eleazer had a daughter Mary, who married Mr. Aaron Cutter of Arlington. See Cutter Geneal. (G. H. Cutter, Arlington, Mass.)

officers and soldiers, or their heirs, in Merrimack. Afterward this grant, being found to be in New Hampshire, was located on the Saco river.

During the witchcraft delusion, Eleazer Putnam "drew his rapier" and punched at an imaginary devil or two which seemed to be torturing one of the afflicted girls. According to the ancient depositions his thrusts were as effective against the witch as against the French and Indians a couple of years before.

—HALL GLEASON.

---

#### THE THATCHER MAGOUN HOUSE.

At the present time some alteration and repair is being made on that prominent building on High street long known as the Magoun residence. It has recently come into new ownership, and when entirely refitted will become a "parish house" of St. Joseph's church.

In fine location and stately in appearance, the grey old mansion with its surrounding trees, its well kept grounds, its red gravel, box-bordered walks and marble statuary, was one of the show places of old Medford. The writer first noticed it at his coming fifty-seven years ago, but was never upon the grounds or within its walls until the present work was well under way.

It was the REGISTER's purpose to present the view shown in "Medford Past and Present" (1905), but that half-tone cut has gone into the limbo of lost things. We can only present our Group of Medford Buildings, and note the upper left of our Frontispiece. We would also refer to wood engraving in the Usher history of Medford, printed in 1886. And again to the steel engraving in Brooks' history, making later reference thereto.

Now, let us look into the history of this old place on High street, also at a little of history and genealogy not written by Brooks or Usher. An old resident (of somewhat noted Medford family), Caleb Swan, left a record



soon after 1855, and our quotations are from his writings, now in the Historical Society's collection.

Benjamin Leathe, born 1714. He lived in the house at the foot of the hill, formerly called Meetinghouse hill, taken down by Mr. Thatcher Magoun about 1835. Mr. Leathe was a shoemaker and made the shoes of Mrs. Samuel Swan [his mother] when he was quite young; his wife made ladies' stays, or corsets. They were very worthy people and members of the church.

Their children were John b. 1742, d. in his father's house Sept. 1815, aged 73; Sally; Richard (a baker in Watertown); and Francis b. 1762, d. Mar. 19, 1840 in Mr. Roach's house,\* age 84.

John and Francis were never sent to school, but Francis learned to read and write, and was well read in the history of England and the United States. He liked very much to read the works of Henry Kirk White, was very quick at figures, often doing sums in his head.

Now we quote from another page of Mr. Swan: —

The visit of General Washington to Colonel Brooks in 1789 was in the forenoon. He came on horseback, escorted by several gentlemen from Boston.†

Their horses were taken to the barn of Mr. Isaac Greenleaf (nearly opposite Dr. Osgood's) [present Unitarian parsonage], where Capt. Ward from Salem afterward built his house and died, and now owned and occupied by Thatcher Magoun.

Mr. Swan also noted, that "Thatcher Magoun, Sr., came to Medford about 1803, married Miss Mary Bradshaw of Medford, died April 16, 1856, aged 80," and that "she died April 23, 1862, aged 78. They had daughters, Susan, Mary and Martha, and son Thatcher, who married his cousin, Martha Tufts of Charlestown. Susan married Rev. Dr. Wm. Adams of New York, died — and Martha became second wife of Dr. Adams."

After the death of Mrs. Capt. Ward, aged 70, in 1831, Thatcher Magoun, Jr., bought the "Captain Ward place," into which he moved and occupied as before quoted.

\*The cellar hole of the Roach house is still (1927) visible, close to High street, near the rectory of Grace Church.

†They came through Cambridge to old Menotomy across Wear bridge, through High Street to Col. Brooks' residence in the easterly end of the old Watson house [demolished in 1916] next the meetinghouse.

And what sort of a "place" or house was it?

The Benjamin Leathe house may have been farther west on the lot than the house of Isaac Greenleaf in 1789, and Captain Ward's house, built soon after the death of "John Leathe in his father's house in 1815." There was abundant room for both houses and barn between the *old house*, which still stands where it was placed when moved across High Street, prior to the building of the third meetinghouse in 1770. Captain Ward's house was a rectangular structure of two stories, with large rooms in either end, and front door and stairway between, with an ell extending westward from the rear side at the end farthest from High street.

Mr. Swan's writing gives the idea that Capt. Ward's house was built on the site of the Greenleaf barn of 1789, that Capt. Ward died there, and that after his widow's death in 1831, Thatcher Magoun bought it.

A careful examination of the "Thatcher Magoun Residence" (steel engraving by J. W. Watts) in Brooks' History shows no bay window on the ell toward the river, no two-story extension at that end of the main house, and no fronting tower and terraces, only a simple portico at front door. This engraving is of 1855; shows a greenhouse with sloping roof of glass in the place occupied by the two-story extension, which must have been built subsequent to 1855, and prior to 1870, when we first saw it in its well-known form.

At our first visit, the present work was well under way. The main staircase and partitions in the first story had been removed, making that part of the original main house into one large room. Three iron beams were put in for support of the second story. During this work the original walls were found to be brick-filled, and *rift* laths of long ago time are the base of the plaster in the original house. The tower is a noticeable feature of the *modernized* house; about twelve feet square, its first story forming a spacious vestibule, lighted through the glass panels of double-leaved doors on all its sides.

A winding staircase in the corner of its second story led to the third floor and another above it to a narrow balcony above the windows. Above this balcony is a small oval plate of glass set in each wall without being encased in a movable sash.

All the interior finish trim of the tower, as well as the staircases and balustrade, was of black walnut, which lumber came into vogue for house finish and furniture in the '60s. Prior to that time, cherry and the more expensive mahogany was the correct kind to use.

All the exterior doors and windows throughout the house were fitted with burglar alarms. We were told that the late owner was offered \$1,500 for the main staircase if it could be taken out entire. Its balustrade has been utilized upon a new flight built in the extension room, to give suitable access to the second floor rooms,—a necessity because of the narrow and crooked back stairways.

The entire interior of the tower remains unchanged, and is something really unique. An entire new roofing of "Toncan metal" has replaced the former roof of tin, which, from neglect, had become badly rusted. All the balustrades upon the roof cornices and balconies have been removed, making the roof more visible. The bricks of the chimney tops have been carefully relaid, and the picturesque tile vents (not in the view of 1855) removed.

Only the granite base and retaining wall next the sidewalk remain as a reminder of the high fence and entrance gateway. We were (long ago) told in story, how an admirer of the latter came with an attendant, to examine, measure and make a copy of it,—and incidentally were told by Mr. Magoun how much *he paid* his designer for it, adding quite expressly *his* personal opinion of them.

Who the architect was who designed the extension, tower and general elaboration added to the original house of Captain Ward we cannot say, but we note the

fact of the erection at top of Winter hill, just over the line in Somerville, of the Governor Everett house in some recent year demolished, also in the '70s the Emmons Hamlin house, near Symmes corner in Winchester, both of the same design. Careful inquiry of elderly Medford men, as to who the master builder was, has none too satisfactory replies, but the most reliable is that it was William B. Thomas. Whoever he was, he did a creditable piece of work, as the lapse of time proves.

The place was looking at its best fifty years ago, and then its beautiful grounds, trees, red-gravel walks—box-bordered, with the marble statuary and blooming shrubbery, were very noticeable and much admired.

At about 1873, Mr. Magoun erected another building at the lower corner of his land near to High street. It was very elaborate in exterior design, with overhanging roof and a cupola, and its interior fixtures are said to have been black walnut. As the land was much below the street grade there was also a basement, and this structure was the "Magoun cow stable." After Mr. Magoun's decease his successor in residence transformed it into a dwelling house, which was demolished before the erection of the armory.

Also in 1873, Mr. Magoun added the front terrace and portico to the house formerly of his father, and in 1874 signified to the selectmen his purpose of presenting it to the town of Medford (also a gift of \$1,000 for fitting it) for a public library. He later added \$4,000 for same.

After Mr. Magoun's decease the former care of the grounds and estate ceased, and in recent years it has been unoccupied. Two years ago a project of erecting an eighty-suite apartment house there was broached, but failed to materialize. With the present refitting its deterioration will have ceased, and the well-known place taken a new lease of life and permanence. —M. W. M.

## WASHINGTON "HISTORICAL QUARTERLY."

From our Exchanges.

In reading "My Arrival in Washington in 1852," seven pages by Margaret (Windsor) Iman, there came to our memory these lines from our old school reader —

Stout-hearted dames they were,  
The mothers of the west.

Mrs. Iman wrote the *Quarterly's* story at the age of ninety (she lived to be ninety-six). She was native of Indiana in the forties, her parents going to Missouri when she was a girl of nine. Her step-mother being "all but a kind one" to her, she joined a company of emigrants on their way westward with ox-teams, a six-months' trip. We quote this: —

On our trip, I think I am safe in saying, I carried a little motherless babe five hundred miles, and when we would camp I would go from camp to camp in search of some good, kind motherly woman to let it nurse, and no one ever refused.

At the end of the journey, she became ill with "mountain fever," but under good care recovered, and cared for another helpless infant, who always loved her as a mother, and died while stopping at her home, sixty years later.

Finding work in the new settlement, she met a workman who was on the building of a steamboat. She says:

He being a skilled workman, as well as a good man, I married him a little later.

It is a wonderful story she tells of those early days of Oregon and Washington.

Of her sixteen children, six of the boys and three girls were living at the time of her writing, thirty-six grandchildren and thirty-seven great-grandchildren. Her son, George Iman, also writes five pages of "Early Days at the Cascades." We commend the reading of these to our readers, as also the diary of Lucy A. Ide, "In a Prairie Schooner," in three latest issues.



## WHEN WE WERE A GOOD OLD TOWN.

We have before us a copy of "Warrant for Town Meeting, Mar. 11, 1867," which some interested person brought to our collection in 1917. The "March meeting" was the town's annual meeting. There were fourteen articles, the first half of them being the usual routine of town business, the eighth "To see if the town will have a bell rung daily, and at what hours."

Water (surface) was too plenty at South and Summer streets, and George Hervey and others petitioned for culverts there, and James Tufts and others, for enlargement of *Gravel bridge* on Salem street, also the one at Ship street. J. Sears and others wanted "a Reservoir at the head of Myrtle street" to save what water came there. The twelfth was "to see if the town will lay a gravel or plank sidewalk on the easterly side of Winthrop street from South to High street, a petition of Charles Munroe and others." The thirteenth was "to establish a permanent grade on High street near the residence of Deacon Train, on request of Dudley Hall and others."

We have not consulted the town records relative to these, but as Grace church had just been erected opposite the residence of Deacon Train, also the neighboring residence of J. W. Tufts, a permanent grade was a desirable one to have fixed. But we see little of sidewalk on Winthrop street *now* sixty years later, and no houses on either side save one built seven years ago next the "Puffer's corner" of that day, but note that at last the old wooden bridge is succeeded by the new one just opened, and that the Winthrop street of today extends from Winchester to Somerville lines, crossing the Mystic Valley parkway, unthought of in that old day.

The old Watson house, where President Washington came to visit Colonel Brooks in 1790, the Deacon Train and the Roach houses are gone, and the cellar hole and the vacant land along the "permanent grade," under the modern name of "Traincroft," await new residents.

## OUR LATE ISSUE.

An apology is due our readers for the delay of this issue. It was our intention to answer this query, "Where was 'the Rocks?'" by a retrospect of North Medford. Non-receipt of promised "copy," which we waited for, is partial cause. We hope yet to do so. When these pages leave the press our Society will be holding its November meeting, we trust under favorable circumstances and outlook. Seventy years ago some hopeful persons started a weekly paper in Medford. In it some things were suggested—not yet materialized. It was a newsy sheet, but only existed (it didn't live) three months. Thirteen years later, two others that are but a memory. Nearly fifty years ago came another (to stay), the *Mercury*, that now issues a "daily evening" edition. Its opening number bears this headline, "Medford—The Fastest-growing City in the State." We note a present population of 53,000, an increase of 35,000 during the thirty years since the time our Society was organized. Isn't there need of society work? If our city is *fast* growing, it is equally true it is cosmopolitan, now that it is three hundred years old.

After all, how little of our real history is known, or told, and how much, even of later date, has been lost!

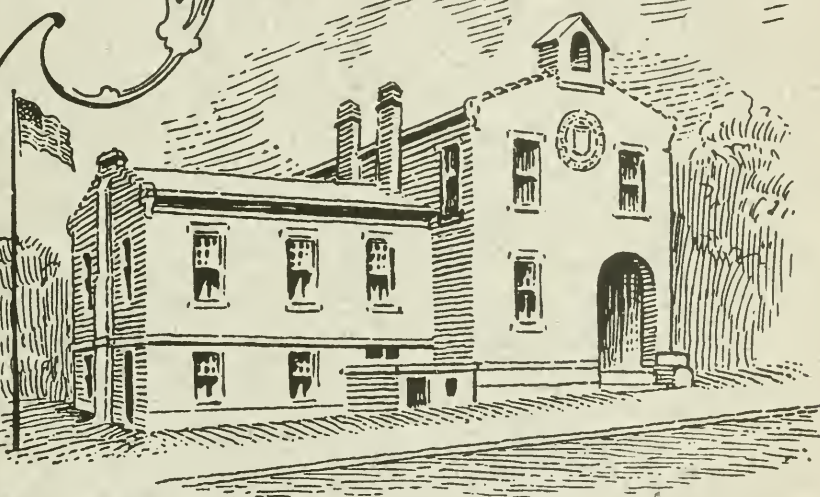
A thick ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in) book of unnumbered pages is the latest "Residents' List," we see the throngs of school children, five to twenty years, and think of the ever-arriving infant class that make up the enumeration. We sincerely hope that the boast of fast growth may be that of a sound, healthy and progressive one, Medford—no mean city.

Vol. XXX.]

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[No. 4.]

# HISTORICAL REGISTER



December, 1927

PUBLISHED BY THE  
MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

F.H.S.

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Entered as second-class matter, under the act of July 16, 1894,  
Medford Station, Boston, Massachusetts.

Meetings of the Society at the Society's home, 10 Governors  
Avenue, on third Mondays at 8.00 P.M., from  
October to May inclusive.

## MEDFORD HISTORICAL REGISTER.

Published quarterly (March, June, September, and December)

BY THE

Medford Historical Society,

AT

No. 10 Governors Avenue, Medford, Mass.

Subscription price, \$1.50 a year, postpaid. Single copies, 40 cents.

For sale at the Society Rooms and by the Treasurer.

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Exchange list in charge of GEO. S. T. FULLER, 15 George Street.

Advertising Manager, Miss E. R. ORNE.

### FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Medford Historical Society, in  
the city of Medford, Mass., the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars for  
the general use and purposes of said Society.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_







THE OLD  
BLANCHARD - BRADBURY - WELLINGTON HOUSE  
The Oldest House in Medford, Built in 1657

# The Medford Historical Register.

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VOL. XXX.

DECEMBER, 1927.

No. 4.

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## HISTORY OF WELLINGTON.

BY ABNER H. BARKER.

Read before the Historical Society, October, 1927, by Joseph C. Smith.

IN May, 1630, Gov. John Winthrop and his associates arrived in Salem from England, and not being satisfied, proceeded to find land which suited them better. They came south along the coast and settled in Boston, Dorchester, Watertown and Medford.

The first record we have of what is now known as Wellington was made at the General Court held in Boston, April 1, 1634, which is as follows: —

There is two hundred acres of land ganted to Mr. Nowell, lying and being on the west side of North river, called Three Mile brook (Malden river).

There is two hundred acres of land granted to Mr. John Wilson, pastor of the church in Boston, lying next to the land granted to Mr. Nowell, on the south, and next to Meadford on the north.

The farm of Mathew Cradock joined the Nowell and Wilson farms, and extended as far as the Mystic lakes and one mile inland from the Mystic river. This grant of land was made to Mr. Cradock, March 4, 1634.

Governor Winthrop owned the land on the south side of the Mystic, in what is now Somerville, extending from Charlestown Neck to College hill, or Walnut hill as it was then called. He settled there in 1630 and called it "Ten Hills Farm."

Rev. Mr. Wilson built a house on the land granted him by the court about 1634. The building was probably a large log house with a small, deep cellar and brick chimney laid in clay, the cellar being walled up with

stone. This building was situated on the hillside near the junction of Middlesex avenue and Fellsway. Of the life of these first settlers we have a very meagre record.

The land was wooded, and the greater part had to be cleared before much in the way of agriculture was accomplished. The years passed, and in February, 1650-51, we find that Rev. John Wilson, Jr., pastor of the church in Dorchester, sold to Thomas Blanchard, who came from Hampshire, England, in 1639 and lived in Braintree, Mass., from 1646 to 1651, "a house and farm of two hundred acres lying on the north side of Mystic river, and between Malden river on the east and the Cradock farm on the west," for £200.

Mr. Blanchard died on his farm, so lately purchased, May 21, 1654. At this time the farm was a part of Charlestown and remained so until 1726, when it was annexed to Malden.

In 1655, after the death of Thomas, the farm was divided between his sons George and Nathaniel.

George Blanchard, son of Thomas, had two wives and ten children. He lived on the half of the farm he had inherited from his father, and died there March 18, 1700, aged eighty-four.

In the deed of Nathaniel to his brother Samuel, in 1657, he received the house, and it is stated that Samuel was building a house on an acre of ground called "The Flax Land," lying lengthwise between the highway and the swamps.

This, therefore, must be the "old house" which every resident of Wellington knows so well. In 1795 it was the only house standing, and was occupied by Captain Wymond Bradbury, a mariner, formerly of Newburyport.

The promontory, extending into the marshes now known as Wellington, was first called "Wilson's point," then "Blanchard's point." The earlier records all call the place "Wilson's or Blanchard's point," Charlestown, then "Malden;" and in 1819, "part in Malden and part in Medford." One hundred and twenty acres of this farm

were annexed to Medford in 1816, which explains the difference. The "old house" was on the part included in Medford.

In 1819 the whole farm, now called one hundred and eighty-three acres, was purchased by Isaac and James Wellington of Lexington for some \$6,000. They married sisters and lived in the old house, where they brought up their families, of five and three children respectively, from a common purse. The old house remained in the Wellington family until recently, when it was purchased with the surrounding land by the brothers J. A. and F. A. Walker.

The farm continued to be divided between two towns from 1817 until 1875, when the easterly part was set off from Everett and annexed to Medford.

The River road, also called Mile lane and Ship street, was referred to in a deed dated 1657 as "The Common Highway" leading from the Mansion house (Blanchard's) into Charlestown common and Medford house. This road, now Riverside avenue, started from Medford house, located in Medford square, followed Salem street, thence over Gravelly bridge across the Common, thence to the southerly end of Cross street, from there it followed the present lines to the western end of Fourth street, which it followed probably its entire length, passing just south of the Pale Face Club house to the bank of the Malden river, where a landing was located just north of the site of the Wellington Boat Club house. This landing is mentioned in the records in 1635 and was called "The Landing at Wilson's Point." It was a wharf made by large trees laid crosswise. The remains of this wharf are still extant and can be plainly seen at low tide.

A branch of this road ran over the hill to the "Mansion house."

A committee of selectmen on "Names of the Streets, May, 1829," made the following report: "From Porter's corner, southeast to Wellington farm, Ship street." This name remained until November 15, 1872, when it was



voted at town meeting "that the name of Ship street be changed to Riverside avenue."

Bradbury avenue was named for Captain Wymond Bradbury, who owned the farm in 1795.

Cradock avenue gets its name from the founder of Medford.

Ship street ended at the "Red Gate," the entrance to Wellington farm, which was owned and tilled by the brothers Isaac and James Wellington, their fertile acres unbroken by street or railroad.

"The Red Gate" was located on Fourth street, a few rods east of its junction with Riverside avenue.

In those days Middlesex avenue had not been thought of, and what is now Riverside avenue, between the end of Fourth street and the Fellsway, was marsh land, a part of the thirty acres of land called the pine swamps, which was sold in 1656 by the Cradock heirs to Mr. Edward Collins of Cambridge. Mr. Collins sold this land, with four and a half acres of upland, to Mr. George Blanchard. The remains of these pine trees can still be seen on the marsh near the side of "Blackbird Village," and it is safe to say that many of these trees must have been marked with the king's arrow, such was their size.

The Western Division of the Boston & Maine Railroad cut through the Wellington farm in 1839, and the Medford Branch Railroad was incorporated March 7, 1845, and finished in 1847.

Before the Wellington station was built, a rough shed with a bench was all there was to protect the people from the storm. There was no agent, and if one wished to travel, he flagged the train himself, got his baggage aboard as best he could, and then climbed aboard himself. After dark a lantern was used, but more often the passenger did not wish to be bothered with it and so he carried a newspaper and as the train came in sight he scratched his brimstone match, lighted the newspaper and put it in the middle of the track and the train stopped.



The Wellington station was built in 1878-79 and Walter S. Sherman of Medford looked after the fires and cleaning until three months before the appointment of the first agent.

On April 21, 1883, Mr. Charles A. Ellsworth, a native of Ipswich, Mass., was appointed agent and entered service, which position he held continuously until May 8, 1911, when he resigned. When Mr. Ellsworth first took charge Wellington was a flag station and no tickets were sold.

Until the switch tower was built, about twenty years ago, the switches at the junction were all operated by hand, and a ball-signal pole, also worked by hand, took the place of the block system now in use. One ball, or red lantern at night, showed that the track was clear from main line trains; two balls gave the right of way to the Medford Branch trains. The trains also whistled for the switch, two long and two short blasts, blown as the outward train reached the dike (Revere Parkway); the inward signal was blown where the Fellsway now crosses the Medford Branch track. During the first twelve years Mr. Ellsworth was alone at the station, opening the station at 6.00 A.M. and closing it at 10.45 P.M.

In 1895 Mr. Frank Palmer was appointed baggage master.

The older residents of Wellington ever have a warm place in their hearts for Mr. Ellsworth, whose courteous manner and kindly smile made many a dull day seem brighter. In addition to his duties as station agent, Mr. Ellsworth had those of postmaster. He was appointed postmaster July 7, 1883, and the Wellington post office was established July 11, 1883. There was no free delivery in those days. If you wanted to know whether that expected letter had arrived you had to go to the station post office yourself or send somebody. There were two mails a day, the first arriving a few minutes past seven in the morning. If you happened to be an early riser and were down on time you saw Mr. Ellsworth

come across the tracks with the bags in one hand and often dragging a trunk with the other, in the days before the railroad furnished a truck. After entering the waiting room he produced a bunch of keys, opened the door and passed out of sight. Next you heard a click and rattle as the lock of the first-class bag was opened, and then the noise of the packages of mail dropping on the floor; then a brief space when quiet reigned, and then came the thump, thump, thumperty thump, as the cancellation stamp did its work. That was long before back cancellation was abolished. Then came the click, click, as the bolts of the ticket window were thrown back, the window was raised, and there before him was a row of children's noses adorning the ticket shelf, and above each nose was a pair of expectant eyes. Then he ran through the mail, calling each name. If no answer came it was put in the alphabetically arranged pigeon-holes on the west side of the ticket office. The last mail came on the 5.25 P.M. train, and then the little waiting room presented a far different scene from that in the morning. There was the same row of noses around the edge of the ticket shelf, to be sure, but seated around the three sides of the room were the high school girls, chattering like magpies, telling the events of the day; there, too, were their older sisters who had just run down to get the air, although every one else said that — — — had a new dress that she wanted — — —, well, somebody's brother to see.

Then there were a few young matrons who came down to meet their husbands and to walk home with them, and over by the stove was a group of boys, still true to the old New England traditions, although wholly unconscious of it. Then came the train, and the already well-filled room was packed to capacity by the business men and a few women who chanced to have been in town shopping. An expectant hush fell over the place and the names were called; even the high school girls' chatter ceased for a time, for every one knew that if there was

too much noise Mr. Ellsworth would wait until it was quiet, and that made supper just so much further away.

After the "mail was out" the bolder youth walked up Fifth street with the maiden of his choice—if some one else didn't cut him out—and many are the courtships that have started at the old station post office and "going home from the mail." The mails were sent out on the 8.33 train in the morning and the 5.58 in the evening. Mr. Ellsworth served faithfully in his dual roll of station agent and postmaster until April 15, 1905, when upon his suggestion the Wellington post office was discontinued and was made a part of the Malden district and free delivery was established. A few months later the Wellington district was transferred to the Medford post office where it has remained to date. In 1911 Mr. Ellsworth gave up his position as station agent and bought a house in Middleton, Mass., where he is glad to welcome his many friends.

For some time prior to 1872 the residents of Wellington tried to secure a bridge across the Malden river and thence over Malden bridge to Boston. The Legislature had granted the right to bridge either the Malden or Mystic, as the county commissioners should judge best for the public good, and the commissioners had, after protracted hearings, decided to bridge the Mystic near Ten-hill farm. They then ordered Medford to build that part of the road on the north side of the river and Somerville that part of the south side leading to the bridge, and the county to build the bridge. They further ordered that the street should be made thirty feet wide, but it was later changed to sixty feet. The road in Medford, now Middlesex avenue, was built by James W. Perry for \$26,351. The bridge was completed early in the spring of 1874, but was not opened to the public until September. Mr. Charles A. Ellsworth took charge June 22, 1874, and resigned April 15, 1883. He was followed by Mr. Waterhouse of Medford, who was succeeded by Mr. Henry Angier of Somerville, who in turn was suc-

ceeded by Mr. Thomas Leahy of Medford, the present superintendent.

This bridge was repaired several times and was replaced by the one built by the Metropolitan Park Commission, which was completed in 1904. Just across the Mystic on a beach, now filled in, a short distance east of the bridge, is the probable site of the launching of the first vessel of any size whose keel was laid on the Mystic. She was a bark of thirty tons called *The Blessing of the Bay*, and was built by Governor Winthrop and launched July 4, 1631, costing £145.

Five years later Governor Winthrop said he would sell her for £160.

The Osgood school (now the home of the Wellington Improvement Association) was built on Salem street near the Malden line in 1851 by Beaty and Bradlee at a cost of \$3,375. It was moved to Wellington in 1883, and was used until the new Osgood school was completed in 1912. At first the lower room only was used for school purposes, but in the fall of 1885 the grammar and intermediate grades were moved to the upper room and the primary grades occupied the lower room.

Until 1872 or 1873 every household had his own private water supply of either a well or cistern.

In 1870 the Medford Water Company commenced the work of laying pipes from Spot pond to Medford square, and it was about two years later that the service was extended to Wellington.

The Wellington farm was in the thirties and forties a large milk producer, having a herd of over one hundred cows. Work began at two o'clock in the morning. The cans were loaded on the wagon and the daily milk was delivered to the hotels and paid for every day at the rate of four pence, half penny a quart, or fifty cents a can.

About 1854 the farm was laid out in house lots, but the enterprise did not flourish until twenty years later, when the Middlesex avenue bridge was completed. The growth was slow until the Fellsway line of the Elevated

road was completed. Since then it has been rapidly increasing.

In 1869 there were but seven houses on the farm. They were: Blanchard (old house); house corner Middlesex and Riverside avenues; Mansion house, Bradbury avenue; J. E. Wellington's, Middlesex avenue; yellow house on Third street, in rear of new school house; Davis house, corner Middlesex avenue and Fourth street; Clover house, corner Riverside avenue, opposite Hall.

After the bridge was finished seven more were built, all within two or three years. They were: Thompson house, Third street; Wood house, Fourth street; Kittedge house, Fifth street; Croswell house, Fourth street; Mitchell house, Fourth street; Ball house, Fourth street.

The chapel on Fourth street was the outgrowth of song services held originally in the homes of different residents. The movement gathered momentum, and after the school house was moved from Salem street, the services were held in the upper room until 1885, when it was taken for school purposes.

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### WITH COMPANY E, 101ST INFANTRY, IN THE WORLD WAR.

Read before Medford Historical Society May 17, 1926, by William F. Shine.

E Company of the old Fifth Regiment Infantry, Lawrence Light Guard, of Medford, Mass., was called out shortly after war was declared by the United States, on April 6, 1917, against Germany—this war caused by that most inhuman act on the high seas, the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine.

The company was quartered in pyramidal tents on the armory grounds. One company street of about sixteen tents, each tent housing a squad of men, eight in number. My tent was headed by Corporal Frank Hurley, and later by Corporal William Harris, who, sad to relate, was blown to pieces by a large shell which exploded just



as Corporal Harris and several other members of the company reached a shell hole. Captain Magee commanded the company. He was one of the finest, most considerate men I have ever served under. He was loved by every man in the company and respected by all. John Tidd was first lieutenant and Frank Gibbs was second lieutenant. Ten sergeants and one hundred and fifty men all told comprised the company war strength.

Scott MacCauley was top sergeant, and early every morning he would take the company out on the banks of the river for exercises.

On July 25, 1917, the company was mustered into Federal service with an elaborate ceremony. About a week later, after a farewell speech by His Honor Mayor Haines, the company left in open cars for Camp Darling, Framingham, Mass. We pitched our tents that same night at Camp Darling.

About August 21, 1917, we were joined with Company E of the Ninth Regiment, which amalgamation made us E Company, 101st Infantry, 26th Division; General Clarence Edwards commanding the division.

On that day there was an electrical storm. After we went into our tents there was a terrible flash of lightning. Every man in the company was thrown off his feet into a huddled heap. The lightning had struck the tent poles and was grounded through our rifles, which were leaning against the tripods, causing a circuit which passed through our bodies. One man on the next company street, I am told, received a burn from that flash which left the mark of a perfect cross on his wrist. The flash of lightning killed two or three men.

When we became known as Company E, 101st Infantry, we were moved to Camp Maguiness, Framingham.

On September 6, 1917, we broke Camp Maguiness and left for parts unknown. Packed in day coaches with our roll packs, we slept sitting down in our seats with our feet stretched out over the fellow opposite us.

At daybreak, September 7, we took a river boat down the East river, past the famous Sing Sing prison at Ossining and down to Hoboken, N. J. As we left the river boat *Bear Mountain*, we marched down the pier. On our way we passed a giant steamship, which we later learned was the *Vaterland*, afterwards known as the *Leviathan*. Its sides loomed up like the sides of the Custom house when standing at its base. We were marched past this palatial boat and put on board one of the United Fruit steamers named the *Pastores*.

After fourteen days on the sub-infested seas and getting quite seasick, we landed at St. Nazaire, France, September 21, 1917. We debarked and marched to Base Camp No. 1, a good-sized French camp about a mile from the city. Along the streets the people very generously showered us with apples, grapes, oranges, peaches and all kinds of fruits and good things.

From St. Nazaire we entrained and our destination was Neuf Chateau, a small town nestling in the foothills of the Vosges mountains. But not our luck to be quartered in the city; we had to hike five kilometers, with our new packs on our backs, out to a very small village having one street, a condition famous in rural France. This village was called Villars; here we spent about four months in training.

Villars was a beautiful place surrounded by sharply rising hills, which at some places were almost mountains. We had our quarters in an old plaster-made grain-mill, and there two hundred and fifty men lived for four months. It was a long, narrow building about two hundred feet long and fifty feet wide. There were two floors, one hundred and twenty-five men on each floor. A small stream flowed through the village on its winding way down from the Vosges. In this stream we made our toilet morning, noon and night. Sometimes we took a bath in this stream. Of course taking a bath in a stream of icy water in November or December has its drawbacks. Therefore only a small number bathed in the stream.

Drill every day from 7.30 A.M. to 12.00 M., and 1.30 to 3.30 P.M.; close order skirmishes, rifle practice and automatic rifle practice, hand grenade and rifle grenade, and everything pertaining to trench and open warfare — we were drilled in these arts.

On February 5, 1918, we marched down to Neuf Chateau, entrained in side-door pullmans, forty hommes and eight chevaux style, packed in like sardines in a box.

We detrained the following day and started to hike for the reserve-line trenches. We hiked about ten kilometers to a large chalk mine. We went down about forty feet below ground. Here we stayed a few hours and then we were ready to go up into the front lines. About 9.00 P.M. we left Rouge Maison and hiked over shell-torn ground, through battered trenches and sticky clay mud which stuck to our boots until we could hardly drag one foot after the other.

About midnight we relieved a company of French soldiers and took our post in a small rifle pit, a trench about eight feet long and four feet deep, with an improvised dugout where two or three could sleep. Our position was at the foot of a hill with the Aisne river in front and on the other side was the German lines.

After about seven days in the first line we were relieved by another battalion of our regiment and we went back to the second line at Froidmont. From there we went to the third line at Soupir.

While we were holding the first line there was a raid pulled on the Germans which was the first successful American raid to be made. Our men captured twenty men and two officers. They were caught in a relief and taken by surprise. Edward Larkin, Claude Seitz, Stew Millar and several other well-known Medford boys were decorated with the Croix de Guerre and citations for bravery above the call of duty.

We then were relieved, after having our baptism of fire in the Chemin des Dames sector, which we learned afterwards was a quiet sector; the French called it a

rest camp. We had a few days' rest at Trampont. After some few days we were ordered to move again, this time to the Toul sector, for several months' tour of duty in the front lines. It was here at Apremont that the 104th Infantry received its colors decorated for bravery for the entire regiment, and they well deserved it.

About midnight one very dark night we relieved the First Division regulars and I have never seen an outfit so scared as these men were. We came into Broussey talking out loud to each other, and as another company from the First Division passed us on the way out they yelled, "Shut up, you d—— fools, you'll all get blown up." But the boys only gave them the ha, ha! and laughed it off and kept on talking. Afterwards we learned they were several spies, French people who remained in Broussey, and they flashed light signals to the Germans on Montsec. We spent quite a long time at this part of the Toul sector, and it was a wet, swampy place. Rubber boots were in order all the time. We would stand guard all night in the front lines, and when in reserve we had to stand to about 4.00 or 5.00 A.M. to be ready for any attack or raiding party. Every morning the Boche shot over a gas attack — mustard, rose, violet and other kinds of gas were employed.

After a relief we went to Beaumont, another part of the Toul sector, and were in reserve, ready to go into the lines at the battle of Seicheprey, where the 102d Infantry met and drove back two battalions of the Kaiser's best guards in a fierce battle which lasted about two days. At the time when the attack began we were taking a rest in a woods about twenty kilometers away. Orders came in suddenly to roll our packs as soon as possible and leave on a forced march for an attack at Seicheprey. That was some hike! We had only two stops in the twenty kilometers, and we made the hike in record time.

We did a trick in the lines at Shrapnel valley and another in Flirey in front of Mandres. On June 26,

1918, we were relieved by the Eighty-third Division and sent back for a rest. We rode on flat cars back as far as the city of Toul and then hiked seven days, about eighteen kilometers a day.

On the second of July we arrived at Meaux and went to a small town nearby where we were going to have a rest. On the 4th of July we had a Regimental Field Day at Meaux. We didn't get any dinner until about 4.00 P.M.

The next day we received orders to roll our packs and be ready to leave immediately. The Germans were marching on to Paris, coming through Meaux. We were piled into trucks and rushed up towards Vaux where the oncoming Germans were marching triumphantly toward Paris over the Paris Metz road. There was another division ahead of us, and on July 1st and 2d the Second American Division, with the 5th and 6th Marines and the 9th and 23d Infantry, had stopped the Germans and had made history in Belleau woods and the Bouresches and at Vaux. One impression I would like to correct, the 9th and 23d Infantry did just as much as the Marines in stopping the Germans at Belleau and Vaux, but from reports one would think the Second Division was composed solely of Marines.

On the 8th and 9th of July we relieved a company of the 23d Infantry. They were telling us to keep quiet and not make so much noise. Well, we didn't get wise until the next morning when we saw where we were posted—on top of a hill with the German trenches just over the top on the other side about forty feet away. When we came into Vaux the village was partly destroyed by shell fire, and in a few days its ruination was completed by German shells.

On the 20th of July we went over the top on the Chateau Thierry drive, through a wheat field, and then we chased the Germans for eighteen kilometers through woods and fields, up hill and down—meeting plenty of stiff rear-guard action. The Germans were chained to



machine guns so they could not run away or surrender. They were killed on their guns. It was a beautiful summer's day, very hot, with a pure blue sky above. We didn't have any water all day, no rations, and no one knew where the soup guns were. We kept on going until dark, then set up lines and rested until dawn, when we were off again. We kept going with nothing but hard-tack to eat and poisoned well water to drink until the 23d, when we were leap-frogged by the 102d Infantry, who went ahead and almost got wiped out at Epieds, where the Germans left a machine gun in every house and lined the hill around the town so when the 102d came into Epieds they were met with a rain of lead from the machine guns. They came back through us with the wounded in bunches on litters and on their backs, carrying them in arms and every way possible.

We were relieved by the Twenty-eighth Division. They went ahead, but they were inexperienced and didn't last but a few hours when our division had to take back the position and hold the ground for a relief, because our ranks were terribly depleted and we only had a few men left in each company. The boys around us were getting wounded so rapidly that we were ordered to grab a stretcher and rush our buddies to the first-aid station. The hospital men with our battalion worked like Trojans, bandaging, putting on splints and doing everything possible to give the boys first aid. It was here the gallant Captain Leahy fell mortally wounded with a piece of shrapnel through his body. With those famous words on his lips, "The command is forward, boys," he fell dead behind a huge oak tree. In the midst of this terrible scene, with the wounded men screaming and the dying men moaning with untold pain, the Germans dropped a box barrage around us and the shells were dropping in on us all the time; then they shot over a mustard gas attack, and if such a thing is possible that was hell on earth. It is a terrible sight to see your buddies getting torn apart by a high explosive shell or

see some poor lad get burned severely by mustard gas, which eats clothes, shoes and flesh and makes the flesh red and raw wherever it touches, and stand there helpless, not knowing when a shell or a machine gun bullet was going to get you.

Explosive shells were doing terrible damage in our ranks and at this time our battalion was all mixed up, keeping together as best they could under such trying conditions.

One lad I had on a stretcher with an explosive bullet through his leg, and it had torn a hole about a half an inch round through his leg, was suffering agony and pleading with us to kill him and put him out of misery.

I was badly gassed and was sent to Base Hospital, No. 36, on the 24th of July, where I was kept for two weeks. Gee, but it sure was good to get into a real bed again, with nice clean white sheets and coverings and a nice soft mattress to lie on. It seemed like a little bit of heaven. And three squares a day! I thought I was dreaming for a while, but it was true. I arrived back in my company in time to start on a six-day hike through woods in a rain storm.

On September 12, 1918, we went over the top on the St. Mihiel drive and we kept going until about ten o'clock that night, when we were leap-frogged by the 102d Regiment.

It was here that Corporal William Russell was killed, and three other men with him. Top Sergeant James Mahoney was killed about nine o'clock that morning. Robert Wetzler was killed and William Reardon severely wounded that afternoon, when we were caught in a trap by a German machine gun crew. About fifteen men were lost and we started ahead all by ourselves. We captured about thirty prisoners and sent them back under guard. We stayed on the St. Mihiel sector for a week or two and then went over to Verdun, where we went over the top twice before the Armistice was signed. Quite a number of the boys were killed here at Verdun.

Irving Woodside was killed in Death valley. Abe Grant, Thomas Brogan and Ralph Schofield were killed here also. Lieutenant Sullivan was killed standing alongside of me, talking to me.

What wonderful news! The Armistice was signed. We were on a hill overlooking Death valley and we nearly went wild with joy.

A ten-day hike started from Verdun with fourteen men left in Company E. Many had been wounded and some killed. Some few had gone on furlough as soon as the Armistice was signed.

We sailed from Brest, March 28, 1919, and arrived at Boston on April 6, 1919, and, believe me, it was good to see home once again after eighteen months in foreign lands fighting one of the fiercest, bloodiest wars the world has ever seen. We were discharged on April 28, 1919, and immediately came home, civilians once again, but patriots for all time, inspired by our service, under the starry banner of the "Red, White and Blue," for the freedom of the world.

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#### EDITOR'S COMMENT—THE OLD AND NEW.

It is with pleasure that we present to our readers our leading article. We had intended to make this issue essentially a Wellington number. The author, Mr. Barker, was there resident, and at its writing an interested member of our Historical Society. In 1918 he read it at our meeting and profusely illustrated it with lantern slides. We also had the privilege of being at its repetition at the Wellington club house. And now, after his passing on, we are thus preserving his interesting work. We commend its careful reading, and also the *Bradbury Ancestry* in Vol. IX, Nos. 3 and 4, by Miss Eliza M. Gill, which especially mentions the "old house" (now standing), the Blanchard-Bradbury-Wellington house, the oldest house in Medford of which we have authentic history.

Our views are the result of the work of photographer Thode, procured to illustrate Miss Gill's paper of 1906.

We regret that our present makeup forbids the presentation of a more detailed account of Bethany church (Methodist Episcopal), organized forty years ago, and of the Protestant Episcopal Sunday school and mission work in other years. We hope later to do so, respecting the old.

As to the new, the closing article and view of St. James' church (Roman Catholic) just completed, and opened for Christmas worship, is certainly interesting, timely and up-to-date, and is prepared and procured especially for the REGISTER.

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#### **HISTORY OF ST. JAMES' CHURCH, WELLINGTON.**

The Wellington section of Medford during its early days and while its residents were somewhat scattered, had been a part of the Immaculate Conception parish of Malden. Soon, however, with the Wellington farm and the other farms in that section being cut up into house lots, and residences springing up very rapidly, the Catholic population increased in numbers in the district, and with the growth in numbers grew the desire and wish that they might have a Catholic church in their midst, and some good priest to administer to the spiritual needs of those grown to manhood and womanhood, as well as the young minds, the future manhood and womanhood of the district.

The wishes and desires of the people were being carefully considered by Cardinal O'Connell in his solicitation for the flock in his charge. Early in December, 1919, the good news came that His Eminence, the Cardinal, had appointed the Rev. John J. O'Donnell, who had been attached to St. Patrick's, Watertown, Mass., as a curate for a number of years, to be the first pastor of a

new parish in the Wellington-Glenwood section of Medford.

A committee of men from the new parish met Father O'Donnell early in December and arranged with him to secure the Wellington club house for services on Sunday, and on Sunday, December 21, 1919, mass was celebrated by Rev. Father O'Donnell for the first time in the club house of the Wellington Improvement Association at Wellington.

The new pastor arranged that two masses would be celebrated each Sunday, one at 9.00 A.M. and one at 11.00 A.M., with Sunday school for the children of the parish in the Wellington club house each Sunday afternoon until arrangements could be made for a temporary church.

At the first services held in the Wellington club house every available inch of space was occupied, and this continued to be the case on each succeeding Sunday.

In a few weeks Father O'Donnell arranged to have mass celebrated each Sunday in the Glenwood section in the fire-house on Spring street. This necessitated, of course, that Father O'Donnell secure another priest, and this was arranged by having a Redemptorist father come from Roxbury, Mass., each Sunday, Father O'Donnell and the Redemptorist father alternating each Sunday between the Wellington club house and the Spring street fire-house.

Early in January, after carefully looking over his parish and the available land, Father O'Donnell purchased the land fronting on the Fellsway and running along Fourth street to Bradbury avenue, and at once arranged for a temporary building that might be used for church purposes until a permanent and suitable church could be erected. The Knights of Columbus' hospital hut at Parker hill, Roxbury, which had been used for war purposes during the World War was secured, taken down and moved to Wellington, re-erected, and the first mass was said in this building in the latter part of May, in 1920.



With land secured, a temporary church erected, plans were rapidly forming looking forward to the hoped-for future day when a permanent church would be erected.

In June, 1920, Rev. Ralph W. Farrell was appointed curate to assist Father O'Donnell.

Father O'Donnell labored for almost six years among the people of Wellington and Glenwood, and sincere regret was felt when in September, 1925, he was rewarded for his faithful work by being made pastor of St. Anne's church, Neponset, Mass.

On September 8, 1925, a new pastor came to Wellington to take Father O'Donnell's place — Rev. Dennis F. Murphy, who had been for many years assistant pastor at St. Paul's, Cambridge. Father Murphy at once took up the reins and made plans looking to a start on the new church in the spring of 1926.

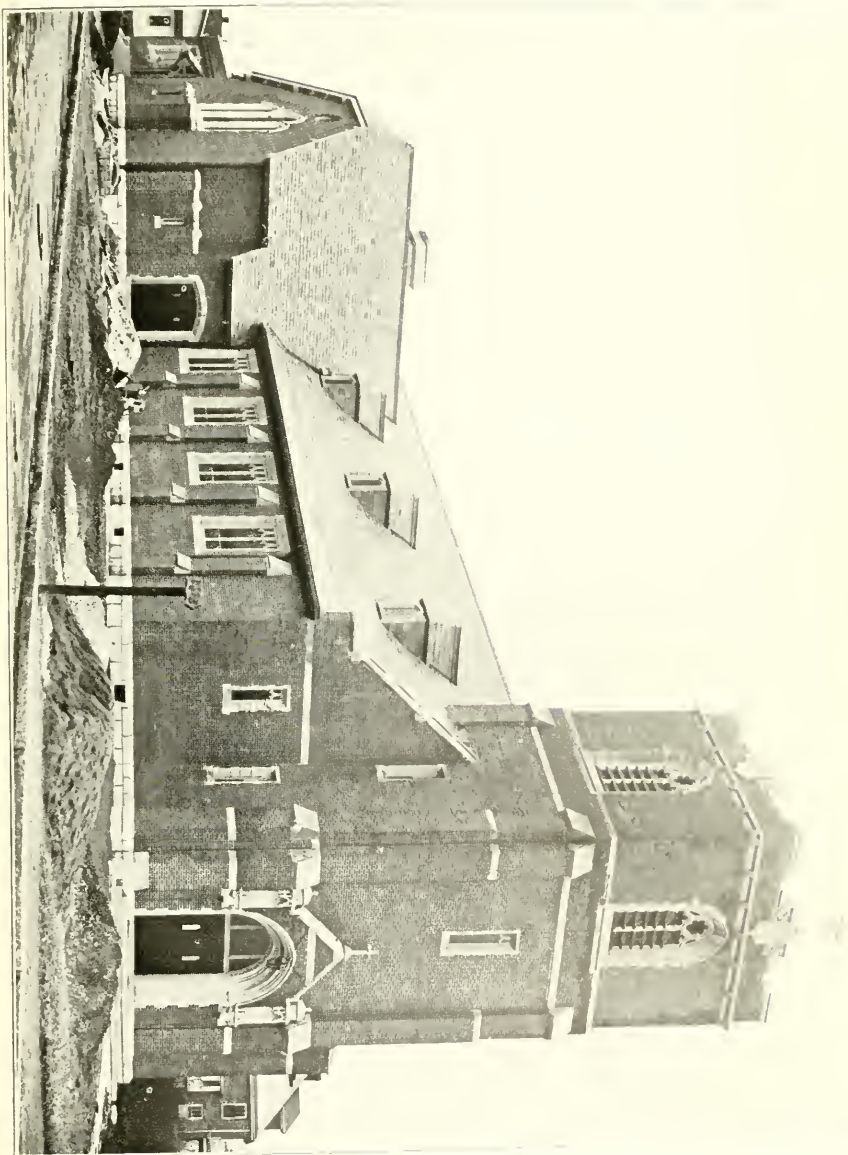
The ground for the new church was broken in the early spring of 1926, and at once the corner at the Fellsway and Fourth street became the scene of activity.

The corner-stone of the new church was laid by the pastor, Rev. Dennis F. Murphy, on May 22, 1927, assisted by Father John H. Powers, who in the meantime had been appointed curate in place of Father Farrell, who was removed to Hudson, Mass.

On September 19, 1927, Father Powers having been transferred, the Rev. John Connors was sent as curate to assist Father Murphy.

The church is of the Old English style, a handsome brick edifice, and will be completed and ready for occupancy on December 25, 1927. The parish has a valuable piece of property with the church at the corner of the Fellsway and Fourth street. To this will no doubt be added in the very near future a rectory for the priests of the parish. The property is situated facing directly on the Fellsway and certainly very much improves and adds to the appearance of the district.

—WILLIAM E. DAILEY.



THE NEW  
ST. JAMES' R. C. CHURCH, WELLINGTON



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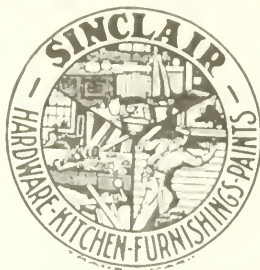
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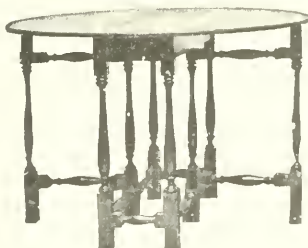
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